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The New Criticism

The New Criticism

An Anthology of Modern Æsthetics and Literary Criticism

EDITED BY

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Preface

THIS book is intended to serve as an introduction to the new theories of æsthetics. Under the stimulus of science, æsthetics has ceased to be a minor branch of idealistic philosophy, included in the last section of a ponderous work to give it an appearance of completeness. Pragmatic philosophy and the empirical method of psychology have removed it from the realm of dialectic. Its principles are now being deduced, it seems to many, for the first time since Aristotle, from the habits of working and the work of the artists themselves.

A subject so new may be consistent in its methods of investigation. It will scarcely have reached dogmatic conclusions. This book, consequently, has not attempted to impose an artificial unity upon its material. Its selections have been clipped bodily from those portions of an author's writings in which his ideas have seemed to flow with greatest originality. They have been reprinted without omission or adaptation. Some, rich in footnotes, are obviously from textbooks. Most are from treatises of more general appeal. What they have in common is neither their style nor their conclusions, but their attitude towards the subject. Despite a wide diversity of background and experience, the authors of these papers are at one in their general point of view. Bosanquet and Croce are primarily philosophers. Richards is steeped in psychology. Haldane is a biologist. A majority of them are literary critics. But they are critics who are seek-

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ing to bring to their knowledge of literature the aid of modern philosophy and psychology. One essay, the last, is not devoted to general principles at all, but is included because it is so fine an application to a specific author of the viewpoint in the selections that precede. In it the æsthetic of literature becomes literary criticism.

The book, however, has not been limited to literature alone. Modern research has been careful to make clear that all the arts have a common æsthetic element. It has sought to draw the line between a work of art and a product of science or a piece of moral propaganda, as well as to distinguish more carefully than in the past the characteristics of the different arts themselves. The problems of the painter and the musician are to a certain extent those of the poet also. In the United States, particularly, investigation into painting not only has gone much further than that into literature but has also been an important influence upon it. Writers like Professor Parker believe that the purer arts, those more remote from the demands of living, music in particular, afford a less adulterated pleasure than those, like literature, whose closer relation to life through the use of words rather than sounds or colors makes their æsthetic elements less easily recognizable. But Mr. Sullivan is at pains to point out that even in music a certain relation to life, though neither obvious nor immediate, is inescapable. And Mr. Fry attempts to restate the theory of "significant form" so as to avoid the dogmatism and over-simplification with which some critics of painting have been defining it. But the question remains debatable whether the purest art is the finest and whether music should be preferred to poetry, which may be the richest in its elements but can scarcely be considered of purest æsthetic appeal.

Such a survey, as must be apparent, cannot be confined within national lines. Since few Americans have done any significant work in the field, the book is for the most part a representation of foreign authors who are at present influential in the United States. Among them Benedetto Croce is, at least chronologically, of first importance. Before him few writers except Coleridge were ready to confess that a poem exists to delight readers and not to teach them. Croce was the first to make æstheticians realize that their subject is of independent interest and not simply a vehicle for politics or religion. He was the first to insist that emotions, or as he called them, intuitions, are more important in art than ideas, and that a true work of art has no direct or intended effect upon conduct, but affords the observer an experience the pleasure of which is an end in itself. Later writers, like Bosanquet and Richards, who have found serious flaws in Croce's theory of expressionism, have insisted that what one enjoys in art is not the mere spectacle of emotion in the artist, but the nature of the pattern his emotions have taken in the tangible objective material of stone or printed words. They believe the central problem of art is the problem of æsthetic form, though they do not find it at all easy to define the term. Spengler and Faure discover it in the integration of national societies as well as in the fine arts. Richards would divorce it from beliefs altogether, and consider it an integration of the poet's emotions, or, in his language, attitudes, impossible of attainment in real life. Fernandez thinks it arises from the functioning of a special talent in the artist quite independent of his personality. These names suggest that the problems of æsthetics are at present being most intelligently discussed in France and England.

It follows, then, that the one kind of writing omitted

from this collection is that in which the ethical ideas literature may contain are given so much importance as to deny or to ignore its essential æsthetic appeal. Such writers confuse æsthetic form with moral discipline. It is the chief concern of this book to shed some light on the nature of æsthetic form by keeping this distinction clear.

E. B. B.

New York City

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The New Criticism

J. E. Spingarn

The New Criticism[1]

WHAT droll creatures these college professors are whenever they talk about art," wrote Flaubert in one of his letters, and voiced the world's opinion of academic criticism. For the world shares the view of the Italian poet that "monks and professors cannot write the lives of poets," and looks only to those rich in literary experience for its opinions on literature. But the poets themselves have had no special grudge against academic criticism that they have not felt equally for every other kind. For the most part, they have objected to all criticism, since what each mainly seeks in his own case is not criticism, but uncritical praise. "Kill the dog, he is a reviewer," cried the young Goethe; and in an age nearer our own William Morris expressed his contempt for those who earn a livelihood by writing their opinions of the works of others. Fortunately for Criticism, it does not live by the grace of poets, to whom it can be of small service at its best, but by the grace of others who have neither the poet's genius nor the critic's insight. I hope to persuade you this evening that the poets have been mistaken in their very conception of the critic's craft, which lives by a power that poets and

[1] A lecture delivered at Columbia University on March 9, 1910; first published by the Columbia University Press in 1911; reprinted in *Creative Criticism: Essays on the Unity of Genius and Taste* (Henry Holt & Company) in 1917; reprinted here from *Criticism in America: Its Function and Status*, copyright, 1924, by Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.

critics share together. The secret of this power has come to men slowly, and the knowledge they have gained by it has transformed their idea of Criticism. What this secret is, and into what new paths Criticism is being led by it, is the subject of my lecture to-night.

I

At the end of the last century, France once more occupied the center of that stage whose auditors are the inheritors of European civilization. Once more all the world listened while she talked and played, and some of the most brilliant of her talk was now on the question of the authority of Criticism. It is not my purpose to tell you (what you know already) with what sober and vigorous learning the official critics of the *Revue des deux Mondes* espoused the cause of old gods with the new weapons of science, and with what charm and tact, with what grace and suppleness of thought, Jules Lemaître and Anatole France, to mention no others, defended the free play of the appreciative mind. Some of the sparks that were beaten out on the anvil of controversy have become fixed stars, the classical utterances of Criticism, as when Anatole France described the critic not as a judge imposing sentence, but as a sensitive soul detailing his "adventures among masterpieces."

To have sensations in the presence of a work of art and to express them, that is the function of Criticism for the impressionistic critic. His attitude he would express somewhat in this fashion: "Here is a beautiful poem, let us say Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. To read it is for me to experience a thrill of pleasure. My delight in it is itself a judgment, and what better judgment is it possible for me to give? All that I can do is to tell how it affects me, what sensations it gives me.

Other men will derive other sensations from it, and express them differently; they too have the same right as I. Each of us, if we are sensitive to impressions and express ourselves well, will produce a new work of art to replace the work which gave us our sensations. That is the art of Criticism, and beyond that Criticism cannot go."

We shall not begrudge this exquisite soul the pleasure of his sensations or his cult of them, nor would he be disconeerted if we were to point out that the interest has been shifted from the work of art to his own impressions. Let us suppose that you say to him: "We are not interested in you, but in *Prometheus Unbound.* To describe the state of your health is not to help us to understand or to enjoy the poem. Your criticism constantly tends to get away from the work of art, and to center attention on yourself and your feelings."

But his answer would not be difficult to find: "What you say is true enough. My criticism tends to get farther and farther from the work of art and to cast a light upon myself; but all criticism tends to get away from the work of art and to substitute something in its place. The impressionist substitutes himself, but what other form of criticism gets closer to *Prometheus Unbound?* Historical criticism takes us away from it in a search of the environment, the age, the race, the poetic school of the artist; it tells us to read the history of the French Revolution, Godwin's *Political Justice,* the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, and Calderón's *Mágico Prodigioso.* Psychological criticism takes me away from the poem, and sets me to work on the biography of the poet; I wish to enjoy *Prometheus Unbound,* and instead I am asked to become acquainted with Shelley the man. Dogmatic criticism does not get any closer to the work of art by testing it according to rules and standards; it sends me

to the Greek dramatists, to Shakespeare, to Aristotle's *Poetics,* possibly to Darwin's *Origin of Species,* in order that I may see how far Shelley has failed to give dramatic reality to his poem, or has failed to observe the rules of his *genre;* but that means the study of other works, and not of *Prometheus Unbound.* Esthetics takes me still farther afield into speculations on art and beauty. And so it is with every form of Criticism. Do not deceive yourself. All criticism tends to shift the interest from the work of art to something else. The other critics give us history, politics, biography, erudition, metaphysics. As for me, I re-dream the poet's dream, and if I seem to write lightly, it is because I have awakened, and smile to think I have mistaken a dream for reality. I at least strive to replace one work of art by another, and art can only find its *alter ego* in art."

It would be idle to detail the arguments with which the advocates of the opposing forms of Criticism answered these questionings. Literary erudition and evolutionary science were the chief weapons used to fight this modern heresy, but the one is an unwieldy and the other a useless weapon in the field of esthetic thought. On some sides, at least, the position of the impressionists was impregnable; but two points of attack were open to their opponents. They could combat the notion that taste is a substitute for learning, or learning a substitute for taste, since both are vital for Criticism; and they could maintain that the relativity of taste does not in any sense affect its authority. In this sense impressionistic Criticism erred only less grievously than the "judicial" Criticism which opposed it. Each in its own way was inadequate and incomplete.

But these arguments are not my present concern; what I wish to point out is that the objective and dogmatic forms of Criticism were fighting no new battle against

impressionistic Criticism in that decade of controversy. It was a battle as old as the earliest reflection on the subject of poetry, if not as old as the sensitiveness of poets. Modern literature begins with the same doubts, with the same quarrel. In the sixteenth century the Italians were formulating that classical code which imposed itself on Europe for two centuries, and which, even in our generation, Brunetière has merely disguised under the trappings of natural science. They evolved the dramatic unities, and all those rules which the poet Pope imagined to be "Nature still but Nature methodized." But at the very moment when their spokesman Scaliger was saying that "Aristotle is our emperor, the perpetual dictator of all the fine arts," another Italian, Pietro Aretino, was insisting that there is no rule except the whim of genius and no standard of judgment beyond individual taste.

The Italians passed on the torch to the French of the seventeenth century, and from that day to this the struggle between the two schools has never ceased to agitate the progress of Criticism in France. Boileau against Saint-Evremond, Classicists against Romanticists, dogmatists against impressionists,—the antinomy is deep in the French nature, indeed in the nature of Criticism itself. Listen to this: "It is not for the purpose of deciding on the merit of this noble poet [Virgil], nor of harming his reputation, that I have spoken so freely concerning him. The world will continue to think what it does of his beautiful verses; and as for me, I judge nothing, I only say what I think, and what effect each of these things produces on my heart and mind." Surely these words are from the lips of Lemaître himself! "I judge nothing; I only say what I feel." But no, these are the utterances of the Chevalier de Méré, a wit of the age of Louis XIV, and he is writing to the secretary

of that stronghold of authority, the French Academy. For some men, even in the age of Boileau, criticism was nothing but an "adventure among masterpieces."

No, it is no new battle; it is the perpetual conflict of Criticism. In every age impressionism (or enjoyment) and dogmatism (or judgment) have grappled with one another. They are the two sexes of Criticism; and to say that they flourish in every age is to say that every age has its masculine as well as its feminine criticism,—the masculine criticism that may or may not force its own standards on literature, but that never at all events is dominated by the object of its studies; and the feminine criticism that responds to the lure of art with a kind of passive ecstasy. In the age of Boileau it was the masculine type which gave the tone to Criticism; in our own, outside of the universities, it has certainly been the feminine. But they continue to exist side by side, ever falling short of their highest powers, unless mystically mated,—judgment erecting its edicts into arbitrary standards and conventions, enjoyment lost in the mazes of its sensuous indecision.

Yet if we examine these opposing forms of Criticism in our own age, we shall find, I think, that they are not wholly without a common ground to meet on; that, in fact, they are united in at least one prepossession which they do not share with the varying forms of Criticism in any of the earlier periods of its history. The Greeks conceived of literature, not as an inevitable expression of creative power, but as a reasoned "imitation" or reshaping of the materials of life; for Aristotle, poetry is the result of man's imitative instinct, and differs from history and science in that it deals with the probable or possible rather than with the real. The Romans conceived of literature as a noble art, intended (though under the guise of pleasure) to inspire men with high

ideals of life. The classicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries accepted this view in the main; for them, literature was a kind of exercise,—a craft acquired by study of the classics, and guided in the interpretation of nature by the traditions of Greek and Roman art. For these men literature was as much a product of reason as science or history. The eighteenth century complicated the course of Criticism by the introduction of vague and novel criteria, such as "imagination," "sentiment," and "taste," yet it was only in part able to liberate itself from the older tradition.

But with the Romantic Movement there developed the new idea which coördinates all Criticism in the nineteenth century. Very early in the century, Mme. de Staël and others formulated the idea that literature is an "expression of society"—a phrase that is merely a half-truth if "society" is interpreted in terms of the narrow circle of the individual poet's life instead of in terms of that society which is commensurate with the spirit of man. Victor Cousin enunciated "the fundamental rule, that expression is the supreme law of art," and, as the meaning of expression was gradually misunderstood and narrowed, became the unwitting parent of the mechanical theories of the French school of "art for art's sake." Later, Sainte-Beuve developed and illustrated his theory that literature is an expression of personality—another misleading half-truth, if by personality is meant, not the artistic personality which unfolds itself in the work of art, but the complex of external traits which the artist exhibits in his practical life. Still later, under the influence of natural science, Taine took a hint from Hegel and elaborated the idea that literature is an expression of race, age, and environment. The extreme impressionists prefer to think of art as the exquisite expression of delicate and fluctuating sensations or impressions of

life. But for all these critics and theorists, literature is an expression of something, of experience or emotion, of the external or internal, of the man himself or something outside the man; yet it is always conceived of as an art of expression. The objective, the dogmatic, the impressionistic critics of our day may set for themselves very different tasks, but the idea of expression is implicit in all they write.

French criticism has been leaning heavily on the idea of expression for a century or more, but no attempt has been made in France to understand its esthetic content, except for a few vague echoes of German thought. For the first to give philosophic precision to the theory of expression, and to found a method of Criticism based upon it, were the Germans of the age that stretches from Herder to Hegel. All the forces of philosophical thought were focused on this central concept, while the critics enriched themselves from out this golden store. I suppose you all remember the famous passage in which Carlyle describes the achievement of German criticism in that age. "Criticism," says Carlyle, "has assumed a new form in Germany. It proceeds on other principles and proposes to itself a higher aim. The main question is not now a question concerning the qualities of diction, the coherence of metaphors, the fitness of sentiments, the general logical truth in a work of art, as it was some half century ago among most critics, neither is it a question mainly of a psychological sort to be answered by discovering and delineating the peculiar nature of the poet from his poetry, as is usual with the best of our own critics at present; but it is, not indeed exclusively, but inclusively, of its two other questions, properly and ultimately a question of the essence and peculiar life of the poetry itself. . . . The problem is not now to determine by what mechanism Addison composed sentences and struck

out similitudes, but by what far finer and more mysterious mechanism Shakespeare organized his dramas and gave life and individuality to his Ariel and his Hamlet. Wherein lies that life; how have they attained that shape and individuality? Whence comes that empyrean fire which irradiates their whole being, and pierces, at least in starry gleams, like a diviner thing, into all hearts? Are these dramas of his not verisimilar only, but true; nay, truer than reality itself, since the essence of unmixed reality is bodied forth in them under more expressive similes? What is this unity of pleasures; and can our deeper inspection discern it to be indivisible and existing by necessity because each work springs as it were from the general elements of thought and grows up therefrom into form and expansion by its own growth? Not only who was the poet and how did he compose, but what and how was the poem, and why was it a poem and not rhymed eloquence, creation and not figured passion? These are the questions for the critic. Criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired; between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import."

I am afraid that no German critic wholly realized this ideal; but it was at least the achievement of the Germans that they enunciated the doctrine, even if they did not always adequately illustrate it in practice. It was they who first realized that art has performed its function when it has expressed itself; it was they who first conceived of Criticism as the study of expression. "There is a destructive and a creative or constructive criticism," said Goethe; the first measures and tests literature according to mechanical standards, the second answers the fundamental questions: "What has the

writer proposed to himself to do? and how far has he succeeded in carrying out his own plan?" Carlyle, in his essay on Goethe, almost uses Goethe's own words, when he says that the critic's first and foremost duty is to make plain to himself "what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his eye, and how far, with such materials as were afforded him, he has fulfilled it."

This has been the central problem, the guiding star, of all modern criticism. From Coleridge to Pater, from Sainte-Beuve to Lemaître, this is what critics have been striving for, even when they have not succeeded; yes, even when they have been deceiving themselves into thinking that they were striving for something else. This was not the ideal of the critics of Aristotle's day, who, like so many of their successors, censured a work of art as "irrational, impossible, morally hurtful, self-contradictory, or contrary to technical correctness." This was not Boileau's standard when he blamed Tasso for the introduction of Christian rather than pagan mythology into epic poetry; nor Addison's, when he tested *Paradise Lost* according to the rules of Le Bossu; nor Dr. Johnson's, when he lamented the absence of poetic justice in *King Lear,* or pronounced dogmatically that the poet should not "number the streaks of the tulip." What has the poet tried to do, and how has he fulfilled his intention? What is he striving to express and how has he expressed it? What vital and essential spirit animates his work, what central impression does it leave on the receptive mind, and how can I best express this impression? Is his work true to the laws of its own being rather than to laws formulated by others? These are the questions that modern critics have been taught to ask when face to face with the work of a poet. Only one *caveat* must be borne in mind when attempting to

answer them; the poet's aim must be judged at the moment of the creative act, that is to say, by the art of the poem itself, and not by the vague ambitions which he imagines to be his real intentions before or after the creative act is achieved. For to create a work of art is the goal of every artist; and all questions in regard to his achievement resolve themselves into this: Has he or has he not created a work of art?

II

The theory of expression, the concept of literature as an art of expression, is the common ground on which critics have met for a century or more. Yet how many absurdities, how many complicated systems, how many confusions have been superimposed on this fundamental idea; and how slowly has its full significance become the possession of critics! To accept the naked principle is to play havoc with these confusions and complications; and no one has seen this more clearly, or driven home its inevitable consequences with more intelligence and vigor, than an Italian thinker and critic of our own day, Benedetto Croce, who has been gaining ground in the English-speaking world from the day when Mr. Balfour several years ago gave him a kind of official introduction in his Romanes Lecture. But I for one needed no introduction to his work; under his banner I enrolled myself long ago, and here re-enroll myself in what I now say. He has led esthetic thought inevitably from the concept that art is expression to the conclusion that all expression is art. Time does not permit, nor reason ask, that we should follow this argument through all its *pros* and *cons*. If this theory of expression be once and for all accepted, as indeed it has been partly though confusedly accepted by all modern critics, the ground of

Criticism is cleared of its dead lumber and its weeds. I propose now merely to point out this dead lumber and these weeds. In other words, we shall see to what conclusions the critical thought and practice of a century have been inevitably converging, and what elements of the old Criticism and the old literary history are disappearing from the new.

In the first place, we have done with all the old Rules. The very conception of "rules" harks back to an age of magic, and reminds the modern of those mysterious words which the heroes of the fairy-tales are without reason forbidden to utter; the rules are a survival of the savage *taboo*. We find few arbitrary rules in Aristotle, who limited himself to empirical inductions from the experience of literature; but they appear in the later Greek rhetoricians; and in the Romans, empirical induction has been hardened into dogma. Horace lays down the law to the prospective playwright in this manner: "You must never have more than three actors on the stage at any one time; you must never let your drama have more or less than five acts." It is unnecessary to trace the history of these rules, or to indicate how they increased in number, how they were arranged into a system by the classicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and how they burdened the creative art of that period. They were never without their enemies. We have seen how Aretino was pitted against Scaliger, Saint-Evremond against Boileau; and in every age the poets have astounded the critics by transgressing rules without the sacrifice of beauty; but it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the Romanticists banished them from the province of Criticism. The pedantry of our own day has borrowed "conventions" from history and "technique" from science as substitutes for the outworn formulæ of the past; but

these are merely new names for the old mechanical rules; and they too will go, when Criticism clearly recognizes in every work of art a spiritual creation governed by its own law.

We have done with the *genres*, or literary kinds. Their history is inseparably bound up with that of the classical rules. Certain works of literature have a general resemblance and are loosely classed together (for the sake of convenience) as lyric, comedy, tragedy, epic, pastoral, and the like; the classicists made of each of these divisions a fixed norm governed by inviolable laws. The separation of the *genres* was a consequence of this law of classicism: comedy should not be mingled with tragedy, nor epic with lyric. But no sooner was the law enunciated than it was broken by an artist impatient or ignorant of its restraints, and the critics have been obliged to explain away these violations of their laws, or gradually to change the laws themselves. But if art is organic expression, and every work of art is to be interrogated with the question, "What has it expressed, and how completely?" there is no place for the question whether it has conformed to some convenient classification of critics or to some law derived from this classification. The lyric, the pastoral, the epic, are abstractions without concrete reality in the world of art. Poets do not really write epics, pastorals, lyrics, however much they may be deceived by these false abstractions; they express themselves, and this expression is their only form. There are not, therefore, only three, or ten, or a hundred literary kinds; there are as many kinds as there are individual poets. But it is in the field of literary history that this error is most obvious. Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*, *Venus and Adonis*, and a sequence of sonnets. What becomes of Shakespeare, the creative artist, when these three works are separated

from one another by the historian of poetry; when they lose their connection with his single creative soul, and are classified with other works with which they have only a loose and vague relation? To slice up the history of English literature into compartments marked comedy, tragedy, lyric, and the like, is to be guilty of a complete misunderstanding of the meaning of Criticism; and literary history becomes a logical absurdity when its data are not organically related but cut up into sections, and placed in such compartments as these. Only in one sense has any of these terms any profound significance, and that is the use of the word "lyric" to represent the free expressiveness of art. All art is lyrical,—the *Divine Comedy*, *King Lear*, Rodin's "Thinker," the Parthenon, a Corot landscape, a Bach fugue, or Isadora Duncan's dancing, as much as the songs of Heine or Shelley.

We have done with the comic, the tragic, the sublime, and an army of vague abstractions of their kind. These have grown out of the generalizations of the Alexandrian critics, acquiring a new lease of life in the eighteenth century. Gray and his friend West corresponded with each other on the subject of the sublime; later, Schiller distinguished between the naïve and the sentimental; Jean Paul defined humor, and Hegel defined the tragic. If these terms represent the content of art, they may be relegated to the same category as joy, hate, sorrow, enthusiasm; and we should speak of the comic in the same general way in which we might speak of the expression of joy in a poem. If, on the other hand, these terms represent abstract classifications of poetry, their use in criticism sins against the very nature of art. Every poet reëxpresses the universe in his own way, and every poem is a new and independent expression. The tragic does not exist for Criticism, but only Æschylus

and Calderón, Shakespeare and Racine. There is no objection to the use of the word tragic as a convenient label for somewhat similar poems, but to find laws for the tragic and to test creative artists by such laws as these is simply to give a more abstract form to the outworn classical conception of dramatic rules.

We have done with the theory of style, with metaphor, simile, and all the paraphernalia of Græco-Roman rhetoric. These owe their existence to the assumption that style is separate from expression, that it is something which may be added or subtracted at will from the work of art, a flourish of the pen, an external embellishment, instead of the poet's individual vision of reality, the music of his whole manner of being. But we know that art *is* expression, that it is complete in itself, that to alter it is to create another expression and therefore to create another work of art. If the poet, for example, says of springtime that " 'Tis now the blood runs gold," he has not employed a substitute for something else, such as "the blood tingles in our veins"; he has expressed his thought in its completeness, and there is no equivalent for his expression except itself.

> Each perfect in its place; and each content
> With that perfection which its being meant.

Such expressions are still called metaphors in the textbooks; but metaphor, simile, and all the old terms of classical rhetoric are signs of the zodiac, magical incantations, astrological formulæ, interesting only to antiquarian curiosity. To Montaigne they suggested "the prattle of chambermaids"; to me they suggest rather the drone and singsong of many schoolmistresses. We still hear talk of the "grand style," and essays on style continue to be written, like the old "arts of poetry" of two centuries ago. But the theory of styles has no longer

a real place in modern thought; we have learned that it is no less impossible to study style as separate from the work of art than to study the comic as separate from the work of the comic artist.

We have done with all moral judgment of art as art. Horace said that pleasure and profit are the function or end of poetry, and for many centuries the critics quarreled over the terms "pleasure" and "profit." Some said that poetry was meant to instruct; some, merely to please; some, to do both. Romantic criticism first enunciated the principle that art has no aim except expression; that its aim is complete when expression is complete; that "beauty is its own excuse for being." It is not the inherent function of poetry to further any moral or social cause, any more than it is the function of bridge-building to further the cause of Esperanto. The historian, the philosopher, the legislator, may consider a work of art, not as a work of art, but as a social document, just as the quarryman may consider a statue merely as so many pounds of marble, but in so doing they ignore its essential purpose and the fundamental source of its power. For if the achievement of the poet be to express any material he may select, and to express it with a completeness that we recognize as perfection, obviously morals can play no part in the judgment which Criticism may form of this artistic achievement. To say that poetry, as poetry, is moral or immoral is as meaningless as to say that an equilateral triangle is moral and an isosceles triangle immoral, or to speak of the immorality of a musical chord or a Gothic arch. It is only conceivable in a world in which dinner-table conversation runs after this fashion: "This cauliflower would be good if it had only been prepared in accordance with international law." "Do you know why my cook's pastry is so good? Because he has never

told a lie or seduced a woman." We do not concern ourselves with morals when we test the engineer's bridge or the scientist's researches; indeed we go farther, and say that it is the moral duty of the scientist to disregard any theory of morals in his search for truth. Beauty's world is remote from both these standards; she aims neither at morals nor at truth. Her imaginary creations, by definition, make no pretense to reality, and cannot be judged by reality's tests. The poet's only moral duty, as a poet, is to be true to his art, and to express his vision of reality as well as he can. If the ideals enunciated by poets are not those which we admire most, we must blame not the poets but ourselves: in the world where morals count we have failed to give them the proper material out of which to rear a nobler edifice. In so far as this is inherent in the nature of our humanity, it is not affected by the special conditions of any single society in space and time: though art is a symbol of the eternal conflict between aspiration and reality, it must at the same time remain forever a symbol of mortal imperfection. Critics everywhere except in America have ceased to test literature by the standards of ethics, and recognize in art an inevitable expression of a side of man's nature that can find no other realization except in it.

We have done with the confusion between the drama and the theater which has permeated dramatic criticism for over half a century. The theory that the drama is not a creative art, but a mere product of the physical exigencies of the theater, is as old as the sixteenth century. An Italian scholar of that age was the first to maintain that plays are intended to be acted on a stage, under certain restricted physical conditions, and before a large and heterogeneous crowd; dramatic performance has developed out of these conditions, and the test of its

excellence is therefore the pleasure it gives to the mixed audience that supports it. This idea was taken hold of by some of the German romanticists, for the purpose of justifying the Shakespearean drama in its apparent divergence from the classical "rules." Shakespeare cannot be judged by the rules of the Greek theater (so ran their argument), for the drama is an inevitable product of theatrical conditions; these conditions in Elizabethan England were not the same as those of Periclean Athens; and it is therefore absurd to judge Shakespeare's practice by that of Sophocles. Here at least the idea helped to bring Shakespeare home to many new hearts by ridding the age of mistaken prejudices, and served a useful purpose, as a specious argument may persuade men to contribute to a noble work, or a mad fanatic may rid the world of a tyrant. But with this achievement its usefulness but not its life was ended. It has been developed into a system, and become a dogma of dramatic critics; it is our contemporary equivalent for the "rules" of seventeenth-century pedantry. As a matter of fact, the dramatic artist is to be judged by no other standard than that applied to any other creative artist: what has he tried to express, and how has he expressed it? It is true that the theater is not only an art but a business, and the so-called "success" of a play is of vital interest to the theater in so far as it is a commercial undertaking. "The success may justify the playwright," said an old French critic, "but it may not be so easy to justify the success." The test of "success" is an economic test, and concerns not art or the criticism of art, but political economy. Valuable contributions to economic and social history have been made by students who have investigated the changing conditions of the theater and the vicissitudes of taste on the part of theatrical audiences; but these have the same relation to Criticism, and to

the drama as an art, that a history of the publisher's trade and its influence on the personal fortunes of poets would bear to the history of poetry.

We have done with technique as separate from art. It has been pointed out that style cannot be disassociated from art; and the false air of science which the term "technique" seems to possess should not blind us to the fact that it too involves the same error. "Technique is really personality; that is the reason why the artist cannot teach it, why the pupil cannot learn it, and why the esthetic critic can understand it," says Oscar Wilde, in a dialogue on "The Critic as Artist," which, amid much perversity and paradox, is illumined by many flashes of strange insight. The technique of poetry cannot be separated from its inner nature. Versification cannot be studied by itself, except loosely and for convenience; it remains always an inherent quality of the single poem. No two poets ever write in the same metre. Milton's line:—

These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof

is called an iambic pentameter; but it is not true that artistically it has something in common with every other line possessing the same succession of syllables and accents; in this sense it is not an iambic pentameter; it is only one thing; it is the line:—

These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof.

We have done with the history and criticism of poetic themes. It is possible to speak loosely of the handling of such a theme as Prometheus by Æschylus and by Shelley, of the story of Francesca da Rimini by Dante, Stephen Phillips, and D'Annunzio, or the story of King Arthur by Malory and Tennyson; but strictly speak-

ing, they are not employing the same theme at all. Each artist is expressing a certain material and labeling it with an historic name. For Shelley Prometheus is only a label; he is expressing his artistic conception of life, not the history of a Greek Titan. It is the vital flame he has breathed into his work that makes it what it is, and with this vital flame (and not with labels) the critic should concern himself in the works of poets. The same answer must be given to those critics who insist on the use of contemporary material in poetry, and praise the poets whose subjects are drawn from the life of our own time. But even if it were possible for critics to determine in advance the subject-matter of poetry or to impose subjects on poets, how can a poet deal with anything but contemporary material? How can a twentieth-century poet, even when he imagines that he is concerned with Greek or Egyptian life, deal with any subject but the life of his own time, except in the most external and superficial detail? Cynics have said since the first outpourings of men's hearts, "There is nothing new in art; there are no new subjects." But the very reverse is true. There are no old subjects; every subject is new as soon as it has been transformed by the imagination of the poet.

We have done with the race, the time, the environment of a poet's work as an element in Criticism. To study these phases of a work of art is to treat it as an historic or social document, and the result is a contribution to the history of culture or civilization, with only a subsidiary interest for the history of art. We are not here concerned with the value of such studies as empirical preparations or concomitants, but only in their relation to the essential and inherent nature of the critical act. "Granted the times, the environment, the race, the passions of the poet, what has he done with his materials,

how has he converted poetry out of reality?" To answer this question of the Italian De Sanctis as it refers to each single work of art is to perform what is truly the critic's vital function; this is to interpret "expression" in its rightful sense, and to liberate esthetic Criticism from the vassalage to *Kulturgeschichte* imposed on it by the school of Taine.

We have done with the "evolution" of literature. The concept of progress was first applied to literature in the seventeenth century, but at the very outset Pascal pointed out that a distinction must here be made between science and art; that science advances by accumulation of knowledge, while the changes of art cannot be reduced to any theory of progress. As a matter of fact, the theory involves the ranking of poets according to some arbitrary conception of their value; and the ranking of writers in order of merit has become obsolete, except in the "hundred best books" of the last decade and the "five-foot shelves" of yesterday. The later nineteenth century gave a new air of verisimilitude to this old theory by borrowing the term "evolution" from science; but this too involves a fundamental misconception of the free and original movement of art. A similar misconception is involved in the study of the "origins" of art; for art has no origin separate from man's life.

> In climes beyond the solar road,
> Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
> The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom;

but though she wore savage raiment, she was no less the Muse. Art is simple at times, complex at others, but it is always art. The simple art of early times may be studied with profit; but the researches of anthropology have no vital significance for Criticism, unless the anthropologist studies the simplest forms of art in the same

spirit as its highest; that is, unless the anthropologist is an esthetic critic.

Finally, we have done with the old rupture between genius and taste. When Criticism first propounded as its real concern the oft-repeated question: "What has the poet tried to express and how has he expressed it?" Criticism prescribed for itself the only possible method. How can the critic answer this question without becoming (if only for a moment of supreme power) at one with the creator? That is to say, taste must reproduce the work of art within itself in order to understand and judge it; and at that moment esthetic judgment becomes nothing more nor less than creative art itself. The identity of genius and taste is the final achievement of modern thought on the subject of art, and it means that fundamentally, in their most significant moments, the creative and the critical instincts are one and the same. From Goethe to Carlyle, from Carlyle to Arnold, from Arnold to Symons, there has been much talk of the "creative function" of Criticism. For each of these men the phrase held a different content; for Arnold it meant merely that Criticism creates the intellectual atmosphere of the age,—a social function of high importance, perhaps, yet wholly independent of esthetic significance. But the ultimate truth toward which these men were tending was more radical than that, and plays havoc with all the old platitudes about the sterility of taste. Criticism at last can free itself of its age-long self-contempt, now that it may realize that esthetic judgment and artistic creation are instinct with the same vital life. This identity does not sum up the whole life of the complex and difficult art of Criticism; but it is this identity which has been lost sight of and needs most emphasis now, for without it Criticism would really be impossible. "Genius is to esthetics what the

ego is to philosophy, the only supreme and absolute reality," said Schelling; and without subduing the mind to this transcendental system, it remains true that what must always be inexplicable to mere reflection is just what gives power to poetry; that intellectual curiosity may amuse itself by asking its little questions of the silent sons of light, but they vouchsafe no answer to art's pale shadow, thought; the gods are kind if they give up their secret in another work of art, the art of Criticism, that serves as some sort of mirror to the art of literature, only because in their flashes of insight taste and genius are one.

Benedetto Croce

Intuition and Expression[1]

KNOWLEDGE has two forms: it is either *intuitive* knowledge or *logical* knowledge; knowledge obtained through the *imagination* or knowledge obtained through the *intellect;* knowledge of the *individual* or knowledge of the *universal;* of *individual things* or of the *relations* between them: it is, in fact, productive either of *images* or of *concepts.*

Intuitive knowledge.

In ordinary life, constant appeal is made to intuitive knowledge. It is said that we cannot give definitions of certain truths; that they are not demonstrable by syllogisms; that they must be learnt intuitively. The politician finds fault with the abstract reasoner, who possesses no lively intuition of actual conditions; the educational theorist insists upon the necessity of developing the intuitive faculty in the pupil before everything else; the critic in judging a work of art makes it a point of honour to set aside theory and abstractions, and to judge it by direct intuition; the practical man professes to live rather by intuition than by reason.

But this ample acknowledgment granted to intuitive knowledge in ordinary life, does not correspond to an equal and adequate acknowledgment in the field of theory and of philosophy. There exists a very ancient science of intellectual knowledge, admitted by all without dis-

[1] Reprinted, with permission, from Benedetto Croce: *Æsthetic* (translated from the Italian by Douglas Ainslie), second edition. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1922.

cussion, namely, Logic; but a science of intuitive knowledge is timidly and with difficulty asserted by but a few. Logical knowledge has appropriated the lion's share; and if she does not slay and devour her companion outright, yet yields to her but grudgingly the humble place of maid-servant or doorkeeper.—What can intuitive knowledge be without the light of intellectual knowledge? It is a servant without a master; and though a master find a servant useful, the master is a necessity to the servant, since he enables him to gain his livelihood. Intuition is blind; intellect lends her eyes.

Its independence with respect to intellectual knowledge.

Now, the first point to be firmly fixed in the mind is that intuitive knowledge has no need of a master, nor to lean upon any one; she does not need to borrow the eyes of others, for she has excellent eyes of her own. Doubtless it is possible to find concepts mingled with intuitions. But in many other intuitions there is no trace of such a mixture, which proves that it is not necessary. The impression of a moonlight scene by a painter; the outline of a country drawn by a cartographer; a musical motive, tender or energetic; the words of a sighing lyric, or those with which we ask, command and lament in ordinary life, may well all be intuitive facts without a shadow of intellectual relation. But, think what one may of these instances, and admitting further the contention that the greater part of the intuitions of civilized man are impregnated with concepts, there yet remains to be observed something more important and more conclusive. Those concepts which are found mingled and fused with the intuitions are no longer concepts, in so far as they are really mingled and fused, for they have lost all independence and auton-

omy. They have been concepts, but have now become simple elements of intuition. The philosophical maxims placed in the mouth of a personage of tragedy or of comedy, perform there the function, not of concepts, but of characteristics of such personage; in the same way as the red in a painted face does not there represent the red colour of the physicists, but is a characteristic element of the portrait. The whole is that which determines the quality of the parts. A work of art may be full of philosophical concepts; it may contain them in greater abundance and they may there be even more profound than in a philosophical dissertation, which in its turn may be rich to overflowing with descriptions and intuitions. But notwithstanding all these concepts the total effect of the work of art is an intuition; and notwithstanding all those intuitions, the total effect of the philosophical dissertation is a concept. The *Promessi Sposi* contains copious ethical observations and distinctions, but does not for that reason lose as a whole its character of simple story or intuition. In like manner the anecdotes and satirical effusions to be found in the works of a philosopher like Schopenhauer do not deprive those works of their character of intellectual treatises. The difference between a scientific work and a work of art, that is, between an intellectual fact and an intuitive fact, lies in the difference of the total effect aimed at by their respective authors. This it is that determines and rules over the several parts of each, not these parts separated and considered abstractly in themselves.

Intuition and perception.

But to admit the independence of intuition as regards concept does not suffice to give a true and precise idea of intuition. Another error arises among those who recognize this, or who at any rate do not explicitly make intuition dependent upon the

intellect, to obscure and confuse the real nature of intuition. By intuition is frequently understood *perception,* or the knowledge of actual reality, the apprehension of something as *real.*

Certainly perception is intuition: the perceptions of the room in which I am writing, of the ink-bottle and paper that are before me, of the pen I am using, of the objects that I touch and make use of as instruments of my person, which, if it write, therefore exists;—these are all intuitions. But the image that is now passing through my brain of a me writing in another room, in another town, with different paper, pen and ink, is also an intuition. This means that the distinction between reality and non-reality is extraneous, secondary, to the true nature of intuition. If we imagine a human mind having intuitions for the first time, it would seem that it could have intuitions of actual reality only, that is to say, that it could have perceptions of nothing but the real. But since knowledge of reality is based upon the distinction between real images and unreal images, and since this distinction does not at the first moment exist, these intuitions would in truth not be intuitions either of the real or of the unreal, not perceptions, but pure intuitions. Where all is real, nothing is real. The child, with its difficulty of distinguishing true from false, history from fable, which are all one to childhood, can furnish us with a sort of very vague and only remotely approximate idea of this ingenuous state. Intuition is the undifferentiated unity of the perception of the real and of the simple image of the possible. In our intuitions we do not oppose ourselves as empirical beings to external reality, but we simply objectify our impressions, whatever they be.

Those, therefore, who look upon intuition as sensation formed and arranged simply according to the categories

of space and time, would seem to approximate more nearly to the truth. Space and time (they say) are the forms of intuition; to have an intuition is to place it in space and in temporal sequence. Intuitive activity would then consist in this double and concurrent function of spatiality and temporality. But for these two categories must be repeated what was said of intellectual distinctions, when found mingled with intuitions. We have intuitions without space and without time: the colour of a sky, the colour of a feeling, a cry of pain and an effort of will, objectified in consciousness: these are intuitions which we possess, and with their making space and time have nothing to do. In some intuitions, spatiality may be found without temporality, in others, *vice versa;* and even where both are found, they are perceived by later reflexion: they can be fused with the intuition in like manner with all its other elements: that is, they are in it *materialiter* and not *formaliter*, as ingredients and not as arrangement. Who, without an act of reflexion which for a moment breaks in upon his contemplation, can think of space while looking at a drawing or a view? Who is conscious of temporal sequence while listening to a story or a piece of music without breaking into it with a similar act of reflexion? What intuition reveals in a work of art is not space and time, but *character, individual physiognomy.* The view here maintained is confirmed in several quarters of modern philosophy. Space and time, far from being simple and primitive functions, are nowadays conceived as intellectual constructions of great complexity. And further, even in some of those who do not altogether deny to space and time the quality of formative principles, categories and functions, one observes an effort to unite them and to regard them in a different manner

Intuition and the concepts of space and time.

from that in which these categories are generally conceived. Some limit intuition to the sole category of spatiality, maintaining that even time can only be intuited in terms of space. Others abandon the three dimensions of space as not philosophically necessary, and conceive the function of spatiality as void of all particular spatial determination. But what could such a spatial function be, a simple arrangement that should arrange even time? It represents, surely, all that criticism and refutation have left standing—the bare demand for the affirmation of some intuitive activity in general. And is not this activity truly determined, when one single function is attributed to it, not spatializing nor temporalizing, but characterizing? Or rather, when it is conceived as itself a category or function which gives us knowledge of things in their concreteness and individuality?

Intuition and sensation.

Having thus freed intuitive knowledge from any suggestion of intellectualism and from every later and external addition, we must now explain it and determine its limits from another side and defend it from a different kind of invasion and confusion. On the hither side of the lower limit is sensation, formless matter, which the spirit can never apprehend in itself as simple matter. This it can only possess with form and in form, but postulates the notion of it as a mere limit. Matter, in its abstraction, is mechanism, passivity; it is what the spirit of man suffers, but does not produce. Without it no human knowledge or activity is possible; but mere matter produces animality, whatever is brutal and impulsive in man, not the spiritual dominion, which is humanity. How often we strive to understand clearly what is passing within us! We do catch a glimpse of something, but this does not appear to the mind as objectified and formed. It is

in such moments as these that we best perceive the profound difference between matter and form. These are not two acts of ours, opposed to one another; but the one is outside us and assaults and sweeps us off our feet, while the other inside us tends to absorb and identify itself with that which is outside. Matter, clothed and conquered by form, produces concrete form. It is the matter, the content, which differentiates one of our intuitions from another: the form is constant: it is spiritual activity, while matter is changeable. Without matter spiritual activity would not forsake its abstractness to become concrete and real activity, this or that spiritual content, this or that definite intuition.

It is a curious fact, characteristic of our times, that this very form, this very activity of the spirit, which is essentially ourselves, is so often ignored or denied. Some confound the spiritual activity of man with the metaphorical and mythological activity of what is called nature, which is mechanism and has no resemblance to human activity, save when we imagine, with Æsop, that *"arbores loquuntur non tantum ferae."* Some affirm that they have never observed in themselves this "miraculous" activity, as though there were no difference, or only one of quantity, between sweating and thinking, feeling cold and the energy of the will. Others, certainly with greater reason, would unify activity and mechanism in a more general concept, though they are specifically distinct. Let us, however, refrain for the moment from examining if such a final unification be possible, and in what sense, but admitting that the attempt may be made, it is clear that to unify two concepts in a third implies to begin with the admission of a difference between the two first. Here it is this difference that concerns us and we set it in relief.

Intuition has sometimes been confused with simple

sensation. But since this confusion ends by being offensive to common sense, it has more frequently been attenuated or concealed with a phraseology apparently designed at once to confuse and to distinguish them. Thus, it has been asserted that intuition is sensation, but not so much simple sensation as *association* of sensations. Here a double meaning is concealed in the word "association." Association is understood, either as memory, mnemonic association, conscious recollection, and in that case the claim to unite in memory elements which are not intuited, distinguished, possessed in some way by the spirit and produced by consciousness, seems inconceivable: or it is understood as association of unconscious elements, in which case we remain in the world of sensation and of nature. But if with certain associationists we speak of an association which is neither memory nor flux of sensations, but a *productive* association (formative, constructive, distinguishing); then our contention is admitted and only its name is denied to it. For productive association is no longer association in the sense of the sensationalists, but *synthesis,* that is to say, spiritual activity. Synthesis may be called association; but with the concept of productivity is already posited the distinction between passivity and activity, between sensation and intuition.

Intuition and association.

Other psychologists are disposed to distinguish from sensation something which is sensation no longer, but is not yet intellectual concept: the *representation* or *image.* What is the difference between their representation or image and our intuitive knowledge? Everything and nothing: for "representation" is a very equivocal word. If by representation be understood something cut off and standing out from the psychic basis of the sensations, then repre-

Intuition and representation.

sentation is intuition. If, on the other hand, it be conceived as complex sensation we are back once more in crude sensation, which does not vary in quality according to its richness or poverty, or according to whether the organism in which it appears is rudimentary or highly developed and full of traces of past sensations. Nor is the ambiguity remedied by defining representation as a psychic product of secondary degree in relation to sensation, defined as occupying the first place. What does secondary degree mean here? Does it mean a qualitative, formal difference? If so, representation is an elaboration of sensation and therefore intuition. Or does it mean greater complexity and complication, a quantitative, material difference? In that case intuition is once more confused with simple sensation.

Intuition and expression.

And yet there is a sure method of distinguishing true intuition, true representation, from that which is inferior to it: the spiritual fact from the mechanical, passive, natural fact. Every true intuition or representation is also *expression*. That which does not objectify itself in expression is not intuition or representation, but sensation and mere natural fact. The spirit only intuits in making, forming, expressing. He who separates intuition from expression never succeeds in reuniting them.

Intuitive activity *possesses intuitions to the extent that it expresses them*. Should this proposition sound paradoxical, that is partly because, as a general rule, a too restricted meaning is given to the word "expression." It is generally restricted to what are called verbal expressions alone. But there exist also non-verbal expressions, such as those of line, colour and sound, and to all of these must be extended our affirmation, which embraces therefore every sort of manifestation of the man, as orator, musician, painter, or anything else.

But be it pictorial, or verbal, or musical, or in whatever other form it appear, to no intuition can expression in one of its forms be wanting; it is, in fact, an inseparable part of intuition. How can we really possess an intuition of a geometrical figure, unless we possess so accurate an image of it as to be able to trace it immediately upon paper or on the blackboard? How can we really have an intuition of the contour of a region, for example of the island of Sicily, if we are not able to draw it as it is in all its meanderings? Every one can experience the internal illumination which follows upon his success in formulating to himself his impressions and feelings, but only so far as he is able to formulate them. Feelings or impressions, then, pass by means of words from the obscure region of the soul into the clarity of the contemplative spirit. It is impossible to distinguish intuition from expression in this cognitive process. The one appears with the other at the same instant, because they are not two, but one.

Illusion as to their difference.

The principal reason which makes our view appear paradoxical as we maintain it, is the illusion or prejudice that we possess a more complete intuition of reality than we really do. One often hears people say that they have many great thoughts in their minds, but that they are not able to express them. But if they really had them, they would have coined them into just so many beautiful, sounding words, and thus have expressed them. If these thoughts seem to vanish or to become few and meagre in the act of expressing them, the reason is that they did not exist or really were few and meagre. People think that all of us ordinary men imagine and intuit countries, figures and scenes like painters, and bodies like sculptors; save that painters and sculptors know how to paint and carve such images, while we bear them unexpressed in

our souls. They believe that any one could have imagined a Madonna of Raphael; but that Raphael was Raphael owing to his technical ability in putting the Madonna upon canvas. Nothing can be more false than this view. The world which as a rule we intuit is a small thing. It consists of little expressions, which gradually become greater and wider with the increasing spiritual concentration of certain moments. They are the words we say to ourselves, our silent judgments: "Here is a man, here is a horse, this is heavy, this is sharp, this pleases me," etc. It is a medley of light and colour, with no greater pictorial value than would be expressed by a haphazard splash of colours, from among which one could barely make out a few special, distinctive traits. This and nothing else is what we possess in our ordinary life; this is the basis of our ordinary action. It is the index of a book. The labels tied to things (it has been said) take the place of the things themselves. This index and these labels (themselves expressions) suffice for small needs and small actions. From time to time we pass from the index to the book, from the label to the thing, or from the slight to the greater intuitions, and from these to the greatest and most lofty. This passage is sometimes far from easy. It has been observed by those who have best studied the psychology of artists that when, after having given a rapid glance at any one, they attempt to obtain a real intuition of him, in order, for example, to paint his portrait, then this ordinary vision, that seemed so precise, so lively, reveals itself as little better than nothing. What remains is found to be at the most some superficial trait, which would not even suffice for a caricature. The person to be painted stands before the artist like a world to discover. Michael Angelo said, "One paints, not with the hands, but with the brain."

Leonardo shocked the prior of the Convent of the Graces by standing for days together gazing at the "Last Supper," without touching it with the brush. He remarked of this attitude: "The minds of men of lofty genius are most active in invention when they are doing the least external work." The painter is a painter, because he sees what others only feel or catch a glimpse of, but do not see. We think we see a smile, but in reality we have only a vague impression of it, we do not perceive all the characteristic traits of which it is the sum, as the painter discovers them after he has worked upon them and is thus able to fix them on the canvas. We do not intuitively possess more even of our intimate friend, who is with us every day and at all hours, than at most certain traits of physiognomy which enable us to distinguish him from others. The illusion is less easy as regards musical expression; because it would seem strange to every one to say that the composer had added or attached notes to a motive which was already in the mind of him who is not the composer; as if Beethoven's Ninth Symphony were not his own intuition and his intuition the Ninth Symphony. Now, just as one who is deluded as to the amount of his material wealth is confuted by arithmetic, which states its exact amount, so he who nourishes delusions as to the wealth of his own thoughts and images is brought back to reality, when he is obliged to cross the *Pons Asinorum* of expression. Let us say to the former, count; to the latter, speak; or, here is a pencil, draw, express yourself.

Each of us, as a matter of fact, has in him a little of the poet, of the sculptor, of the musician, of the painter, of the prose writer: but how little, as compared with those who bear those names, just because they possess the most universal dispositions and energies of human nature in so lofty a degree! How little too does a painter

possess of the intuitions of a poet! And how little does one painter possess those of another painter! Nevertheless, that little is all our actual patrimony of intuitions or representations. Beyond these are only impressions, sensations, feelings, impulses, emotions, or whatever else one may term what still falls short of the spirit and is not assimilated by man; something postulated for the convenience of exposition, while actually non-existent, since to exist also is a fact of the spirit.

Identity of intuition and expression.

We may thus add this to the various verbal descriptions of intuition, noted at the beginning: intuitive knowledge is expressive knowledge. Independent and autonomous in respect to intellectual function; indifferent to later empirical discriminations, to reality and to unreality, to formations and apperceptions of space and time, which are also later: intuition or representation is distinguished as *form* from what is felt and suffered, from the flux or wave of sensation, or from psychic matter; and this form, this taking possession, is expression. To intuit is to express; and nothing else (nothing more, but nothing less) than *to express*.

Benedetto Croce

Intuition and Art[1]

BEFORE proceeding further, it may be well to draw certain consequences from what has been established and to add some explanations.

Identity of art and intuitive knowledge.

We have frankly identified intuitive or expressive knowledge with the æsthetic or artistic fact, taking works of art as examples of intuitive knowledge and attributing to them the characteristics of intuition, and *vice versa*. But our identification is combated by a view held even by many philosophers, who consider art to be an intuition of an altogether special sort. "Let us admit" (they say) "that art is intuition; but intuition is not always art: artistic intuition is a distinct species differing from intuition in general by something *more*."

No specific difference.

But no one has ever been able to indicate of what this something more consists. It has sometimes been thought that art is not a simple intuition, but an intuition of an intuition, in the same way as the concept of science has been defined, not as the ordinary concept, but as the concept of a concept. Thus man would attain to art by objectifying, not his sensations, as happens with ordinary intuition, but intuition itself. But this process of raising to a second power does not exist; and the comparison of it with the ordinary and scientific concept does not prove what is intended, for the

[1] From Croce's *Æsthetic*. See footnote p. 27.

good reason that it is not true that the scientific concept is the concept of a concept. If this comparison proves anything, it proves just the opposite. The ordinary concept, if it be really a concept and not a simple representation, is a perfect concept, however poor and limited. Science substitutes concepts for representations; for those concepts that are poor and limited it substitutes others, larger and more comprehensive; it is ever discovering new relations. But its method does not differ from that by which is formed the smallest universal in the brain of the humblest of men. What is generally called *par excellence* art, collects intuitions that are wider and more complex than those which we generally experience, but these intuitions are always of sensations and impressions.

Art is expression of impressions, not expression of expression.

No difference of intensity.

For the same reason, it cannot be asserted that the intuition, which is generally called artistic, differs from ordinary intuition as intensive intuition. This would be the case if it were to operate differently on the same matter. But since the artistic function is extended to wider fields, yet does not differ in method from ordinary intuition, the difference between them is not intensive but extensive. The intuition of the simplest popular love-song, which says the same thing, or very nearly, as any declaration of love that issues at every moment from the lips of thousands of ordinary men, may be intensively perfect in its poor simplicity, although it be extensively so much more limited than the complex intuition of a love-song by Leopardi.

The whole difference, then, is quantitative, and as such is indifferent to philosophy, *scientia qualitatum.*

Certain men have a greater aptitude, a more frequent inclination fully to express certain complex states of the soul. These men are known in ordinary language as artists. Some very complicated and difficult expressions are not often achieved, and these are called works of art. The limits of the expression-intuitions that are called art, as opposed to those that are vulgarly called non-art, are empirical and impossible to define. If an epigram be art, why not a simple word? If a story, why not the news-jottings of the journalist? If a landscape, why not a topographical sketch? The teacher of philosophy in Molière's comedy was right: "whenever we speak, we create prose." But there will always be scholars like Monsieur Jourdain, astonished at having spoken prose for forty years without knowing it, who will have difficulty in persuading themselves that when they call their servant John to bring their slippers, they have spoken nothing less than—prose.

The difference is extensive and empirical.

We must hold firmly to our identification, because among the principal reasons which have prevented Æsthetic, the science of art, from revealing the true nature of art, its real roots in human nature, has been its separation from the general spiritual life, the having made of it a sort of special function or aristocratic club. No one is astonished when he learns from physiology that every cell is an organism and every organism a cell or synthesis of cells. No one is astonished at finding in a lofty mountain the same chemical elements that compose a small stone fragment. There is not one physiology of small animals and one of large animals; nor is there a special chemical theory of stones as distinct from mountains. In the same way, there is not a science of lesser intuition as distinct from a science of greater intuition, nor one of ordinary intuition as dis-

tinct from artistic intuition. There is but one Æsthetic, the science of intuitive or expressive knowledge, which is the æsthetic or artistic fact. And this Æsthetic is the true analogue of Logic, which includes, as facts of the same nature, the formation of the smallest and most ordinary concept and the most complicated scientific and philosophical system.

Artistic genius.

Nor can we admit that the word *genius* or artistic genius, as distinct from the non-genius of the ordinary man, possesses more than a quantitative signification. Great artists are said to reveal us to ourselves. But how could this be possible, unless there were identity of nature between their imagination and ours, and unless the difference were only one of quantity? It were better to change *poeta nascitur* into *homo nascitur poeta*: some men are born great poets, some small. The cult of the genius with all its attendant superstitions has arisen from this quantitative difference having been taken as a difference of quality. It has been forgotten that genius is not something that has fallen from heaven, but humanity itself. The man of genius who poses or is represented as remote from humanity finds his punishment in becoming or appearing somewhat ridiculous. Examples of this are the *genius* of the romantic period and the *superman* of our time.

But it is well to note here, that those who claim unconsciousness as the chief quality of an artistic genius, hurl him from an eminence far above humanity to a position far below it. Intuitive or artistic genius, like every form of human activity, is always conscious; otherwise it would be blind mechanism. The only thing that can be wanting to artistic genius is the *reflective* consciousness, the superadded consciousness of the historian or critic, which is not essential to it.

Content and form in Æsthetic.

The relation between matter and form, or between *content* and *form*, as is generally said, is one of the most disputed questions in Æsthetic. Does the æsthetic fact consist of content alone, or of form alone, or of both together? This question has taken on various meanings, which we shall mention, each in its place. But when these words are taken as signifying what we have above defined, and matter is understood as emotionality not æsthetically elaborated, or impressions, and form as intellectual activity and expression, then our view cannot be in doubt. We must, that is to say, reject both the thesis that makes the æsthetic fact to consist of the content alone (that is, the simple impressions), and the thesis which makes it to consist of a junction between form and content, that is, of impressions plus expressions. In the æsthetic fact, expressive activity is not added to the fact of the impressions, but these latter are formed and elaborated by it. The impressions reappear as it were in expression, like water put into a filter, which reappears the same and yet different on the other side. The æsthetic fact, therefore, is form, and nothing but form.

From this was inferred not that the content is something superfluous (it is, on the contrary, the necessary point of departure for the expressive fact); but that *there is no passage* from the qualities of the content to those of the form. It has sometimes been thought that the content, in order to be æsthetic, that is to say, transformable into form, should possess some determined or determinable qualities. But were that so, then form and content, expression and impression, would be the same thing. It is true that the content is that which is convertible into form, but it has no determinable qualities until this transformation takes place. We know

nothing about it. It does not become æsthetic content before, but only after it has been actually transformed. The æsthetic content has also been defined as the *interesting*. That is not an untrue statement; it is merely void of meaning. Interesting to what? To the expressive activity? Certainly the expressive activity would not have raised the content to the dignity of form, had it not been interested in it. Being interested is precisely the raising of the content to the dignity of form. But the word "interesting" has also been employed in another and an illegitimate sense, which we shall explain further on.

Criticism of the imitation of nature and of the artistic illusion.

The proposition that art is *imitation of nature* has also several meanings. Sometimes truths have been expressed or at least shadowed forth in these words, sometimes errors have been promulgated. More frequently, no definite thought has been expressed at all. One of the scientifically legitimate meanings occurs when "imitation" is understood as representation or intuition of nature, a form of knowledge. And when the phrase is used with this intention, and in order to emphasize the spiritual character of the process, another proposition becomes legitimate also: namely, that art is the *idealization* or *idealizing* imitation of nature. But if by imitation of nature be understood that art gives mechanical reproductions, more or less perfect duplicates of natural objects, in the presence of which is renewed the same tumult of impressions as that caused by natural objects, then the proposition is evidently false. The coloured waxen effigies that imitate the life, before which we stand astonished in the museums where such things are shown, do not give æsthetic intuitions. Illusion and hallucination have nothing to do with the calm domain of artistic intuition. But on the other hand

if an artist paint the interior of a wax-work museum, or if an actor give a burlesque portrait of a man-statue on the stage, we have work of the spirit and artistic intuition. Finally, if photography have in it anything artistic, it will be to the extent that it transmits the intuition of the photographer, his point of view, the pose and grouping which he has striven to attain. And if photography be not quite an art, that is precisely because the element of nature in it remains more or less unconquered and ineradicable. Do we ever, indeed, feel complete satisfaction before even the best of photographs? Would not an artist vary and touch up much or little, remove or add something to all of them?

Criticism of art conceived as a fact of feeling, not a theoretical fact. Æsthetic appearance and feeling.

The statements repeated so often, that art is not knowledge, that it does not tell the truth, that it does not belong to the world of theory, but to the world of feeling, and so forth, arise from the failure to realize exactly the theoretic character of simple intuition. This simple intuition is quite distinct from intellectual knowledge, as it is distinct from perception of the real; and the statements quoted above arise from the belief that only intellectual cognition is knowledge. We have seen that intuition is knowledge, free from concepts and more simple than the so-called perception of the real. Therefore art is knowledge, form; it does not belong to the world of feeling or to psychic matter. The reason why so many æstheticians have so often insisted that art is *appearance* (*Schein*), is precisely that they have felt the necessity of distinguishing it from the more complex fact of perception, by maintaining its pure intuitiveness. And if for the same reason it has been claimed that art is *feeling* the reason is the same. For if the concept as content of art, and historical reality as such, be ex-

cluded from the sphere of art, there remains no other content than reality apprehended in all its ingenuousness and immediacy in the vital impulse, in its *feeling,* that is to say again, pure intuition.

The theory of the *æsthetic senses* has also arisen from the failure to establish, or from having lost to view, the character of expression as distinct from impression, of form as distinct from matter.

Criticism of the theory of æsthetic senses.

This theory can be reduced to the error just indicated of wishing to find a passage from the qualities of the content to those of the form. To ask, in fact, what the æsthetic senses are, implies asking what sensible impressions are able to enter into æsthetic expressions, and which must of necessity do so. To this we must at once reply, that all impressions can enter into *æsthetic* expressions or formations, but that none are bound to do so of necessity. Dante raised to the dignity of form not only the "sweet colour of the oriental sapphire" (visual impressions), but also tactual or thermic impressions, such as the "dense air" and the "fresh rivulets" which "parch the more" the throat of the thirsty. The belief that a picture yields only visual impressions is a curious illusion. The bloom on a cheek, the warmth of a youthful body, the sweetness and freshness of a fruit, the edge of a sharp knife, are not these, too, impressions obtainable from a picture? Are they visual? What would a picture mean to an imaginary man, lacking all or many of his senses, who should in an instant acquire the organ of sight alone? The picture we are looking at and believe we see only with our eyes would seem to his eyes to be little more than an artist's paint-smeared palette.

Some who hold firmly to the æsthetic character of certain groups of impressions (for example, the visual and auditive), and exclude others, are nevertheless ready

to admit that if visual and auditive impressions enter *directly* into the æsthetic fact, those of the other senses also enter into it, but only as *associated*. But this distinction is altogether arbitrary. Æsthetic expression is synthesis, in which it is impossible to distinguish direct and indirect. All impressions are placed by it on a level, in so far as they are æstheticized. A man who absorbs the subject of a picture or poem does not have it before him as a series of impressions, some of which have prerogatives and precedence over the others. He knows nothing as to what has happened prior to having absorbed it, just as, on the other hand, distinctions made after reflexion have nothing whatever to do with art as such.

The theory of the æsthetic senses has also been presented in another way; as an attempt to establish what physiological organs are necessary for the æsthetic fact. The physiological organ or apparatus is nothing but a group of cells, constituted and disposed in a particular manner; that is to say, it is a merely physical and natural fact or concept. But expression does not know physiological facts. Expression has its point of departure in the impressions, and the physiological path by which these have found their way to the mind is to it altogether indifferent. One way or another comes to the same thing: it suffices that they should be impressions.

It is true that the want of given organs, that is, of certain groups of cells, prevents the formation of certain impressions (when these are not otherwise obtained through a kind of organic compensation). The man born blind cannot intuit and express light. But the impressions are not conditioned solely by the organ, but also by the stimuli which operate upon the organ. One who has never had the impression of the sea will never be able to express it, in the same way as one who has

never had the impression of the life of high society or of the political arena will never express either. This, however, does not prove the dependence of the expressive function on the stimulus or on the organ. It merely repeats what we know already: expression presupposes impression, and particular expressions particular impressions. For the rest, every impression excludes other impressions during the moment in which it dominates; and so does every expression.

Unity and invisibility of the work of art.

Another corollary of the conception of expression as activity is the *indivisibility* of the work of art. Every expression is a single expression. Activity is a fusion of the impressions in an organic whole. A desire to express this has always prompted the affirmation that the work of art should have *unity,* or, what amounts to the same thing, *unity in variety.* Expression is a synthesis of the various, or multiple, in the one.

The fact that we divide a work of art into parts, a poem into scenes, episodes, similes, sentences, or a picture into single figures and objects, background, foreground, etc., may seem opposed to this affirmation. But such division annihilates the work, as dividing the organism into heart, brain, nerves, muscles and so on, turns the living being into a corpse. It is true that there exist organisms in which division gives rise to other living beings, but in such a case we must conclude, maintaining the analogy between the organism and the work of art, that in the latter case too there are numerous germs of life each ready to grow, in a moment, into a single complete expression.

It may be said that expression sometimes arises from other expressions. There are simple and there are *compound* expressions. One must surely admit some difference between the *eureka,* with which Archimedes

expressed all his joy at his discovery, and the expressive act (indeed all the five acts) of a regular tragedy.—Not in the least: expression always arises directly from impressions. He who conceives a tragedy puts into a crucible a great quantity, so to say, of impressions: expressions themselves, conceived on other occasions, are fused together with the new in a single mass, in the same way as we can cast into a melting furnace formless pieces of bronze and choicest statuettes. Those choicest statuettes must be melted just like the pieces of bronze, before there can be a new statue. The old expressions must descend again to the level of impressions, in order to be synthesized in a new single expression.

By elaborating his impressions, man *frees* himself from them. By objectifying them, he removes them from him and makes himself their superior. The liberating and purifying function of art is another aspect and another formula of its character as activity. Activity is the deliverer, just because it drives away passivity.

This also explains why it is usual to attribute to artists both the maximum of sensibility or *passion,* and the maximum of insensibility or Olympian *serenity.* The two characters are compatible, for they do not refer to the same object. The sensibility or passion relates to the rich material which the artist absorbs into his psychic organism; the insensibility or serenity to the form with which he subdues and dominates the tumult of the sensations and passions.

Bernard Bosanquet

Nature and the Arts[1]

THE natural order in which to approach the problems of any enquiry is the order of their difficulty. When you have solved the simplest, its solution affords the basis for an approach to the next simplest, and so on.

Therefore we are not at all concerned with the historical order of things. What we want to do to-day is to form some idea of the rank taken by the different achievements of the æsthetic spirit arranged in accordance with the difficulties which are overcome in each of them, or in other words, with the degree of æsthetic embodiment which they respectively achieve.

The simplest cases of æsthetic utterance, the easiest to apprehend and explain, are some which I should like to call, in a usage which I am aware is very lax, *a priori* embodiments of the æsthetic spirit. We spoke in the last lecture of the square and the cube, which carry their steadiness, and sturdiness, and equality in all directions, actually written on their faces. That's all square, we say. We do not pledge ourselves to any one special meaning expressed in words. An æsthetic embodiment can be embodied in nothing but itself. But the constant application of expressions like those cited here and above suffice to show that these simple patterns are obvious or *a priori* embodiments of simple feelings. Along with them we may place simple rhythms, simple

[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *Three Lectures on Æsthetic* by Bernard Bosanquet. London: The Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1923.

melodies, the pulsations of the dance, and the like. These are in fact simple patterns; and all of them have obvious analogies with each other. Hogarth described his enjoyment of the "stick and ribbon ornament" (the guilloche) as like that of watching a country dance. This reminds us of the theory of the rising mountain we referred to in the last lecture.

In all these objects of æsthetic feeling, whose pleasurableness I have ventured to call *a priori*, we have what might be called the simplest formal character. The three characteristics of æsthetic objects which we began by laying down in the last lecture, are here plain and obvious, stability, relevance, community, rooted in the character of the mere abstract pattern which we perceive or in which we are absorbed (as in the rhythm of the dance). Fast or slow, simple or intricate, self-completing or interrupted—all these characters seem to adhere immediately to the lines and movements, colours and sounds which fall into the simple arrangements. I am not asserting that this is the earliest origin of, say, the dance. We are not speaking historically; and it is quite possible that a representative meaning in, *e.g.*, the dance, as the war dance, the bear dance, the Dionysus dance, may be older than the recognition of the simple æsthetic value of sound and rhythm. But that does not concern us to-day. We are concerned with æsthetic value, and with that alone.

The point, for æsthetic theory, is that so far, in such *a priori* expression, we have no element of representation or almost none. "Almost none," because some one might urge that a cube drawn on paper can only have its peculiar character by being taken to represent an actual solid cube of wood or stone. And that would be so with the rising mountain, if we think of it as a mountain. But that is really not necessary at this primary

level. The square drawn on paper is enough, and so are the systems of lines and shapes (such as the pattern from the ceiling at Orchomenus) and the simple living in the pulsations of the dance.

We get to a point beyond this in difficulty and complexity—whatever the historical relations may be—when we get two factors to deal with instead of one. You may have a drawing on paper which is a square pattern; and you may have one—the early draughtsmen were very fond of them—which not only is a pattern on paper or on gold, but which represents, say, a bull hunt.

This is a new factor, and it introduces not only quite a different motive in art, but the entire problem of what passes as the beauty of nature. Because obviously a drawing of a bull hunt recalls to us things rather than patterns. For a pattern, as a rule, you want the help of a draughtsman; but for things you can see all round you every day, you seem to want no help at all. Only they do not *prima facie* show you simple abstract patterns; and so, how do you bring them to act as an æsthetic embodiment of feeling?

And the same difficulty applies to a whole great branch of the activity of fine art. It may draw for you a bull hunt, or sculpture Phœbus Apollo, or sing to you the story of Troy. All this is on a quite different footing from what we called the *a priori* form of æsthetic expression. There is a tendency to bring in mere facts; to test the representation by your knowledge and to demand that it should by that test be adequate, and even to say that its æsthetic value lies in bringing these independent facts and beings completely and faithfully before you. In short, there is a vicious tendency to subordinate expression to knowledge, which means losing hold of the principle of æsthetic semblance. This is, as we saw, that for æsthetic value we need, and

can use, nothing in the way of embodiment which is not an appearance moulded freely by the mind as a vehicle of æsthetic form, the soul of things, in which we live them.

The æsthetic problem at this point springs from an embarrassment of wealth. In place of a comparatively small range of simple and obvious expression, we have thrown upon our hands the whole abundance of the sensible and imaginable world as a claimant for æsthetic value. We seem forced in some way and degree to admit knowledge and fact as instruments of expression; to use our experience of the character and qualities which things have really and in actuality, to help our imagination in its exploration of the forms which respond satisfactorily to feeling.

It is plain that we are not to lose hold of what we have got; the simple pattern or rhythm which we ventured to call expressive *a priori*. Every work of art and every thing of beauty presents such a pattern, so to speak, on its surface. But we must contrive to understand how the same principle can extend into the sphere of the representation of things; of which things, *prima facie*, we know only what we have learned from experience, and can say, it would seem, little that is necessary or inevitable as to the connection of appearances with any character or quality which could help to embody feeling. For instance, a man's laughing might be the expression of pain or anger, if we had not learned by experience that it is otherwise. Green trees might be the withering ones, and brown trees the flourishing ones; without special experience of human bodies you could not know how or when their appearance indicates vitality or character; without experience of animals you could not know that the drawing of the bull hunt indicates activity, courage, ferocity. You cannot read these

things off from the patterns or the colour-combinations; you have ultimately to arrive at them from the knowledge of facts. When you come to human portraiture, the reading of the human countenance, geometrical properties of lines and shapes help you not at all, or hardly at all. You have to rely upon special lessons, learned in the school of life.

This is, I think, the difficulty as it presents itself. I have purposely overstated it a little.

The first thing that strikes us is that it is extraordinarily parallel to the difficulty as to how far necessary knowledge can be had in the sphere of natural science. You cannot see the chemical properties of substances in them, as you can see the properties of circles or triangles; you cannot ultimately establish even the law of gravitation except by finding that it seems to explain all facts of the kind it applies to. But yet there is such a thing as natural science, and it has its degrees of necessity; and some things are pretty fully and generally established and shed great clearness wherever they apply, and some again are mere observations for which no reason or general probability whatever can be adduced.

Well, this is the sort of way, I suppose, in which we must conceive the problem of making representation instrumental to expression. I see the statue of the Discobolos, and I see that it represents a man in act to hurl a disc. Now to live myself into this representation, I must consider what a man is, and I must have some knowledge how his body works and balances, and so on. I cannot read off anything at all from the statue merely as a pattern in marble, as I could if it were a marble cube or sphere. This is the difficulty of representation as I stated it.

But it was, as the comparison of natural science shows, a little overstated. Because, it is not a mere

dead fact of my experience that a man's body in a certain position indicates a certain sort or phase of vitality. It is true that I must know something about a man's body before I can live myself into it at all; but when I can do so, the attitude of the disc-thrower's body is after all necessary in relation to my feeling, and not a bare disconnected fact. It has, to use my former phrase, *something* of *a priori* expressiveness. When you know its structure, its position does become inevitable. It is hopeless, indeed, to reduce the expressiveness of representation, or of the contemplation of nature which raises the same problem, to the *a priori* expressiveness of a pattern like a square. True, the appearance which is the object will, in principle, fail to be a satisfactory embodiment of feeling, unless it is at least satisfactory as a mere pattern, or *a priori* expression; but also and additionally, in harmony with this satisfactoriness, it must be satisfactorily expressive through the concrete character of that which it represents. You must interpret the Discobolos through your experience of human bodies; and I suppose that your sense of the life in the abstract pattern is itself actually amplified and intensified by this deeper experience. As the necessity of science penetrates into and extends over the realm of fact, so, I imagine, the expressiveness of the abstract pattern penetrates, by experience used in the service of the imagination, into the realm of nature and man, and extends itself over and appropriates ground that is primarily representative and gains at the same time a deeper significance from it. The Greek treatment of drapery, which is both delightful in itself as a pattern, and deeply expressive, *e.g.* of movement, is a good example. It should be noted that we exclude mere association from the expressive connection which we demand. The expressiveness must be in some degree in-

herent in the form, or what I have called *a priori*. Mere association brings us down at once to the level of knowledge of fact, as when my old portmanteau reminds me of Florence.

And further, in the power which very successful representation undoubtedly exercises over our minds, there is active, I have no doubt, a principle which is really of high æsthetic value, although in enhancing the importance of skilful copying it is misconstrued and misapplied.

I will repeat myself so far as to give an example which I gave many years ago, and in which I admit that I take great enjoyment. It is—I am shamelessly quoting from myself—perhaps the earliest æsthetic judgment which Western literature contains. It is in the Homeric description of the metal-working deity's craftsmanship in the shield of Achilles. He has made upon it the representation of a deep fallow field with the ploughmen driving their furrows on it; and the poet observes, "And behind the plough the earth went black, and looked like ploughed ground, though it was made of gold; that was a very miracle of his craft."

Now what was the miracle here, that made Homer cry out at it with delight? It was not, surely, that when you have one bit of ploughed land you can make another like it. That goes on all day when a man ploughs a field. Or what made Dante say of the sculptures on the marble of Purgatory, that one who saw the reality would see no better than he did, and that the representation of some smoke set his eyes and nose at variance as to whether it was real?

Surely the miracle lies in what Homer accents when he says, "Though it was made of gold." It lies here: that without the heavy matter and whole natural process of the reality, man's mind possesses a magic by

which it can extract the soul of the actual thing or event, and confer it on any medium which is convenient to him, the wall of a cave, or a plate of gold, or a scrap of paper. And when these great poets insist on the likeness of the imitation, I take it that the real underlying interest is in the conquest of the difference of the medium. So that really, in the naïve praise of successful imitation, we have, if we read it rightly, the germ of the fundamental doctrine of æsthetic semblance. That is to say, what matters is not the thing, but the appearance which you can carry off, and deal with apart from it, and recreate. And the real sting of even the crudest glorification of copying is *this wonder that you can carry off with you a thing's soul, and leave its body behind.* It is quite natural to misconceive this miracle as if the merit lay in making the soul as near as possible a replica of the body. But if you treat the soul as the body at its very best, that is not a bad analogy for the problem of representation in dealing with the æsthetic semblance. See how pregnant this praise of copying is. Dante, in the same passage, says that the carvings put to shame "not only Polycleitus, but Nature herself." It is the spirit of Whistler's "Nature's creeping up." You can copy a thing so splendidly that your copy will be more beautiful than the thing.

Thus we are prepared to understand the place and value of representation, which has always been something of a theoretical difficulty in æsthetic. It introduces *prima facie* an enormously larger and deeper world of non-representative pattern-designing, to be the instrument of the embodiment of feeling. But the difficulty is that *qua* a mere world of fact, it has no capacity for *a priori* expression; and the use of it for expressive purposes, the imaginative use of fact, is therefore subject to innumerable dangers, arising from unæsthetic inter-

ests, which attach themselves to actual reality and therefore also to its imitative reproduction. Why multiply, for example, scenes and stories of wickedness? Is there not enough of it in the world already? If you are simply copying what you find, revealing in it no new depth or passion, the question is unanswerable.

I promised not to be historical; but I may mention it here as an extraordinary piece of insight on Aristotle's part, in which, essentially, he followed and summarised Plato, when he said that music was of all the arts the *most* imitative, meaning expressive, precisely on the ground that of all the arts it was the *least* representative. Its expression, that is to say, approached most nearly to what we have ventured to call *a priori* expressiveness. Its rhythms and combinations went directly to the heart of emotion. They are, Aristotle says, *direct* resemblances of emotions, that is, without making the circuit of reference to anything which had a name and existence in the external world. I suppose this is in general the doctrine of musical expression accepted to-day.

In speaking of the place of representation in æsthetic experience, we have said all that is important on the æsthetic position of the love of natural beauty. For nature in its utmost range, including artificial things, and man as an external object, is just the region of all the things which can be objects of representative reproduction. The only thing that need be added is that by nature we mean, for æsthetic purposes, the fulness of the soul or semblance of external things, that which imaginative perception freely apprehends, and remodels in the interest of feeling. There is no reason to cut down our meaning to the attenuated constructions of physical science. They are not nature as it appears, and nature as it appears is what we love and admire.

It is the living external world, as we *re*live it in our fullest imaginative experience.

It is well known that this, in its fulness, is a point of view which takes time to develop. "The charm of Nature," I believe, in the modern sense, is first mentioned by an Alexandrine poet of about the third century A.D. "In the house you have rest; out-of-doors the charm of nature." [2]

And as we saw, though this imaginative experience is not within actual reality, and is not to be interpreted as theoretical truth, yet it may make a difference to our general theory of things, and our theory may make a difference to it. And so, for example, representation of nature and imitation and idealisation are very different things according as we hold that nature has in it a life and divinity which it is attempting to reveal,—so that idealisation is the positive effort to bring to apprehension the deeper beauty we feel to be there,—or as we hold that nature is at bottom a dead mechanical system, and idealisation therefore lies in some way of treating it which weakens or generalises its effect and makes it less and not more of what its fullest character would be. No doubt, theory seeking for truth does not accept imaginative expressions as logical conclusions, but it is bound to take account of the fact that imagination finds in experience the instrument of that immense embodiment of feeling which it constructs. Æsthetic imagination and logical theory are co-ordinate powers. Neither can do the work of the other. But both reveal something to us in their own way.

We have seen that what we may call pure or *a priori* expression is not merely the simplest and primary character of æsthetic embodiments, but recurs also at what

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[2] Mackail, *Select Epigrams*, p. 278.

is almost the climax of æsthetic achievement, that is, in the art of music. This leads us to observe how capriciously, as it would seem, this principle of representation asserts itself in the hierarchy of the arts. In architecture it is present hardly at all; in sculpture and painting it is predominant; in music, it has hardly any place as of right, or a very subordinate one; in poetry, it reasserts itself with almost predominant power. There seems to be in some degree a struggle between the two sides of the æsthetic attitude, the side of direct expression through rhythm and sensuous combinations, and the side which, though its contribution to expression is indirect, yet brings with it in the end the whole resources of the imaginable universe. As we saw, if we consider the problem accurately, it is impossible to dispense with either factor, and they have indeed no æsthetic existence apart. Yet the idea for example that in music we have the pure type of expressiveness, that towards which every art is bound to aspire, does appear to indicate an inherent impulse of the art-spirit towards a mode of utterance which is not loaded with the weight of representation.[3] We have only to say, that we have attempted to display the necessary root of this apparent conflict, and to explain how the representative factor, while having no independent justification, is nevertheless essential, in its place, to the full development of the æsthetic attitude.

After all, we can relive the character and conflicts of man, as we express them for instance in the drama, with a necessity which not only covers a wider and deeper world, but which also is more unmistakable and precise in its sequences, than the simple language of rhythm or the decorative pattern. For the mind of man is open to us as the extension of our own, and has its own necessity,

[3] Cp. what Pater said of colour, that it is "a spirit upon things, by which they become expressive to the spirit."

which weaves its great patterns on the face of the whole world. And in these patterns—the patterns of life itself—the fullest feeling finds embodiment.

If we now proceed to say something of what is involved in the classification of the arts, it is not for the sake of advocating any particular arrangement. Mere classification is always an idle study, but the general condition and essence of the difference between kindred things usually throws a searching light on their inmost nature.

Why, then, are there different arts? The simple answer to this question takes us, I believe, to the precise root and source of the whole principle of æsthetic expressiveness, which we have already analysed in more general terms.

We should begin, I am convinced, from the very simplest facts. Why do artists make different patterns, or treat the same pattern differently, in wood-carving, say, and clay-modelling, and wrought-iron work? If you can answer this question thoroughly, then, I am convinced, you have the secret of the classification of the arts and of the passage of feeling into its æsthetic embodiment; that is, in a word, the secret of beauty.

Why, then, in general does a worker in clay make different decorative patterns from a worker in wrought-iron? I wish I could go into this question with illustrations and details, but I will admit at once that I am not really competent to do so, though I have taken very great interest in the problem. But in general there can surely be no doubt of the answer. You cannot make the same things in clay as you can in wrought-iron, except by a *tour de force*. The feeling of the work is, I suppose, altogether different. The metal challenges you, coaxes you, as William Morris said of the molten glass, to do a particular kind of thing with it, where its

tenacity and ductility make themselves felt. The clay, again, is delightful, I take it, to handle, to those who have a talent for it; but it is delightful of course in quite different manipulations from those of the wrought-iron. I suppose its facility of surface, how it lends itself to modelling or to throwing on the wheel, must be its great charm. Now the decorative patterns which are carried out in one or the other may, of course, be suggested *ab extra* by a draughtsman, and have all sorts of properties and interests in themselves as mere lines on paper. But when you come to carry them out in the medium, then, if they are appropriate, or if you succeed in adapting them, they become each a special phase of the embodiment of your whole delight and interest of "body-and-mind" in handling the clay or metal or wood or molten glass. It is alive in your hands, and its life grows or rather magically springs into shapes which it, and you in it, seem to desire and feel inevitable. The feeling for the medium, the sense of what can rightly be done in it only or better than in anything else, and the charm and fascination of doing it so—these, I take it, are the real clue to the fundamental question of æsthetics, which is "how feeling and its body are created adequate to one another." It is parallel to the question in general philosophy, "Why the soul has a body." It is the same sort of thing as the theory of the rising mountain, but it is much less open to caprice, being absolute fact all through, and it explains not merely the interpretation of lines and shapes, but the whole range and working of the æsthetic imagination in the province of fine art, which is its special province.

To this doctrine belongs the very fruitful modern topic of the relation of beautiful handicraft with the workman's life, as the outcome and expression of his body-and-mind, and amid all the disparagement which

the most recent views of art are apt to throw upon Ruskin, we must remember that it was first and foremost to his inspired advocacy that this point of view owes its recognition to-day, and William Morris, for instance, recognised him, in this respect at least, as his master.

The differences of the great arts then are simply such differences as those between clay-modelling, wood-carving, and wrought-iron work, developed on an enormous scale, and with their inevitable consequences for whole provinces of æsthetic imagination.

For this is a fact of the highest importance. Every craftsman, we saw, feels the peculiar delight and enjoys the peculiar capacity of his own medium. This delight and sense of capacity are of course not confined to the moments when he is actually manipulating his work. His fascinated imagination lives in the powers of his medium; he thinks and feels in terms of it; it is the peculiar body of which *his* æsthetic imagination and no other is the peculiar soul.

Thus there grow up the distinct traditions, the whole distinctive worlds of imaginative thought and feeling, in which the great imaginative arts have their life and being.

And this leads to the important question, what is meant by the ideal in art. The essential point is, as we saw when speaking of the idealisation of nature, that the ideal should not be a tendency which is negatively related to the fullest æsthetic expression. The ideal has often indicated a generalisation and abstraction, ultimately depending on the notion that to get at the root and law of things is to get at a generalised common element in which they resemble one another. But we saw that if it means anything in application to nature, it means the heightened expression of character and in-

dividuality which come of a faith in the life and divinity with which the external world is instinct and inspired.

This same conception of the ideal is the lesson of our doctrine of art. The ideal of every art must be revealed, I take it, in terms of the art itself; and it must be what underlies the whole series of efforts which the artist's imagination has made and is making, to create, in his own medium, an embodied feeling in which he can rest satisfied. It is the world as he has access to it through his art. It may seem to him more than any of his works; but it only has existence in them and in the effort which they imply when taken all together. The danger is to try and make a picture of this effort, apart from any of its achievements, which is really nothing. Then you get the enfeebled ideal, which means the omission of all character and individuality.

Now let us take a particular case. If our view of the distinction and connection of the arts is right, and it is simply a question of the medium adopted by each, and the capacities of that medium as proved by experience, what is to be said of the distinctive character of *poetry?* It seems in a sense to have almost no material element, to work directly with significant ideas in which the objects of the imagination are conveyed. Language is so transparent, that it disappears, so to speak, into its own meaning, and we are left with no characteristic medium at all.

I do not think there can be any doubt about the true attitude here. Poetry, like the other arts, has a physical or at least a sensuous medium, and this medium is sound. It is, however, significant sound, uniting inseparably in itself the factors of formal expression through an immediate pattern, and of representation through the meanings of language, exactly as sculpture and painting deal at once and in the same vision both with formal

patterns and with significant shapes. That language is a physical fact with its own properties and qualities is easily seen by comparing different tongues, and noting the form which different patterns, such as sapphic or hexameter verse, necessarily receive in different languages, such as Greek and Latin. To make poetry in different languages, *e.g.* in French and German, is as different a task as to make decorative work in clay and iron. The sound metre and meaning are the same inseparable product in a poem as much as the colour, form, and embodied feeling in a picture. And it is only an illusion to suppose that because you have significant sentences in poetry, therefore you are dealing with meanings which remain the same outside the poem, any more than a tree or a person whom you think you recognise in a picture, is, as you know them at home so to speak, *the* tree or *the* person *of* the picture. Poetry no more keeps its meaning when turned into corresponding prose, than a picture or a sonata keeps its meaning in the little analyses they print in the catalogues or programmes.

Shelley, according to Professor Bradley, had a feeling of the kind referred to. Poetry seemed to him to deal with a perfectly apt and transparent medium, with no qualities of its own, and therefore approaching to being no medium at all, but created out of nothing by the imagination for the use of the imagination. While the media employed by the other arts, being gross and physical and having independent qualities of their own, seemed to him rather obstacles in the way of expression than apt instruments of it. The answer to such a view is what we have just given.

It is the qualities of the media which give them the capacity to serve as embodiments of feeling; and sono-

rous language, the medium of poetry, has its peculiarities and definite capacities precisely like the others.

Here, I cannot but think, we are obliged to part company, with some regret, from Benedetto Croce. He is possessed, as so often is the case with him, by a fundamental truth, so intensely that he seems incapable of apprehending what more is absolutely necessary to its realisation. Beauty, he sees, is for the mind and in the mind. A physical thing, supposed unperceived and unfelt, cannot be said in the full sense to possess beauty. But he forgets throughout, I must think, that though feeling is necessary to its embodiment, yet also the embodiment is necessary to feeling. To say that because beauty implies a mind, therefore it is an internal state, and its physical embodiment is something secondary and incidental, and merely brought into being for the sake of permanence and communication—this seems to me a profound error of principle, a false idealism. It meets us, however, throughout Croce's system, according to which "intuition"—the inward vision of the artist—is the only true expression. External media, he holds, are, strictly speaking, superfluous, so that there is no meaning in distinguishing between one mode of expression and another (as between paint and musical sound and language). Therefore there can be no classification of the arts, and no fruitful discussion of what can better be done by one art than by another. And æsthetic—the philosophy of expression—is set down as all one with linguistic—the philosophy of speech. For there is no meaning in distinguishing between language in the sense of speech, and other modes of expression. Of course, if he had said that speech is not the only form of language, but that every art speaks to us in a language of its own, that would have had much to be said for it. But I do not gather that that is his intention.

His notion is not a new one among theorists. It really is deeply rooted in a philosophical blunder. No doubt it seems obvious, when once pointed out, that things are not all there, not complete in all qualities, except when they are appreciated in a mind. And then, having rightly observed that this is so, we are apt to go on and say that you have them complete, and have all you want of them, if you have them before your mind and have not the things in bodily presence at all. But the blunder is, to think that you can have them completely before your mind without having their bodily presence at all. And because of this blunder, it seems fine and "ideal" to say that the artist operates in the bodiless medium of pure thought or fancy, and that the things of the bodily world are merely physical causes of sensation, which do not themselves enter into the effects he uses. It is rather a natural thing to say about poetry, because we discount the physical side of language. We glance at its words and do not sound them. And Shelley, as we saw, says something very like that.

But at the very beginning of all this notion, as we said, there is a blunder. Things, it is true, are not complete without minds, but minds, again, are not complete without things; not any more, we might say, than minds are complete without bodies. Our resources in the way of sensation, and our experiences in the way of satisfactory and unsatisfactory feeling, are all of them won out of our intercourse with things, and are thought and imagined by us as qualities and properties of the things. Especially we see this in music. Here we have an art entirely made up of a material—musical tone—which one may say does not exist at all in the natural world, and is altogether originated by our inventive and imaginative manipulation of physical things, pressing on in the line of creative discovery which

something very like accident must at first have opened up to us.[4] Apart from this imaginative operation upon physical things, our fancy in the realm of music could have done as good as nothing.

And in principle it is the same with all the arts. All the material and the physical process which the artist uses—take our English language as used in poetry for an example—has been elaborated and refined, and, so to speak, consecrated by ages of adaptation and application in which it has been fused and blended with feeling—and it carries the life-blood of all this endeavour in its veins; and that is how, as we have said over and over again, feelings get their embodiment, and embodiments get their feeling. If you try to cut the thought and fancy loose from the body of the stuff in which it moulds its pictures and poetic ideas and musical constructions, you impoverish your fancy, and arrest its growth, and reduce it to a bloodless shade. When I pronounce even a phrase so commonplace in itself as "Rule, Britannia!" the actual vibrations of the sound, the bodily experience I am aware of in saying it, is alive with the history of England which passed into the words in the usage and formation of the language. Up to a certain point, language is poetry ready-made for us.

And I suppose that a great painter, in his actual handling of his brush, has present with him a sense of meaning and fitness which is one with the joy of execution, both of which the experience of a lifetime has engrained in the co-operation of his hand and eye. I take it, there is a pleasure in the brush stroke, which *is also* a sense of success in the use of the medium, and of meaning in hitting the exact effect which he wants to get. We common people have something analogous to all

[4] This applies even to the development of song, so far as that involves a musical system.

this, when we enjoy the too-rare sensation of having found the right word. In such "finding" there is a creative element. A word is, quite strictly speaking, not used twice in the same sense.

Croce says, indeed, that the artist has every stroke of the brush in his mind as complete before he executes it as after. The suggestion is that using the brush adds nothing to his inward or mental work of art. I think that this is false idealism. The bodily thing adds immensely to the mere idea and fancy, in wealth of qualities and connections. If we try to cut out the bodily side of our world, we shall find that we have reduced the mental side to a mere nothing.

And so, when we said that you can carry away the soul of a thing and leave its body behind, we always added that you must in doing so confer its soul upon a new and spiritualised body. Your imagination must be an imagination of something, and if you refuse to give that something a definite structure, you pass from the æsthetic semblance to the region of abstract thought. I have spoken of sound as physical; if this is a difficulty it is enough to call it sensuous, and sensuous in immediate connection with other physical properties and experiences. This applies both to music and to language.

All this later argument of ours, starting from the importance of medium and technique, has aimed at exhibiting in detail the double process of creation and contemplation which is implied in the æsthetic attitude, and the impossibility of separating one factor of it from another. And it is the same question as that stated in other words, how a feeling can be got into an object. This is the central problem of the æsthetic attitude; and, as we have seen, the best material for solving it for us who are not great artists comes from any minor experience we may have at command in which we have been

aware of the outgoing of feeling into expression. We must think not merely of the picture in the gallery or the statue in the museum, but of the song and the dance, the dramatic reading, the entering into music, or the feel of the material in the minor arts, or simply, of the creative discovery of the right word.

The festal or social view of art will help us here. Suppose a tribe or a nation has won a great victory; "they are feeling big, and they want to make something big," as I have heard an expert say. That, I take it, is the rough account of the beginning of the æsthetic attitude. And according to their capacity and their stage of culture, they may make a pile of their enemies' skulls, or they may build the Parthenon. The point of the æsthetic attitude lies in the adequate fusion of body and soul, where the soul is a feeling, and the body its expression, without residue on either side.

George Santayana

The Nature of Beauty[1]

§ 1. It would be easy to find a definition of beauty that should give in a few words a telling paraphrase of the word. We know on excellent authority that beauty is truth, that it is the expression of the ideal, the symbol of divine perfection, and the sensible manifestation of the good. A litany of these titles of honour might easily be compiled, and repeated in praise of our divinity. Such phrases stimulate thought and give us a momentary pleasure, but they hardly bring any permanent enlightenment. A definition that should really define must be nothing less than the exposition of the origin, place, and elements of beauty as an object of human experience. We must learn from it, as far as possible, why, when, and how beauty appears, what conditions an object must fulfil to be beautiful, what elements of our nature make us sensible of beauty, and what the relation is between the constitution of the object and the excitement of our susceptibility. Nothing less will really define beauty or make us understand what æsthetic appreciation is. The definition of beauty in this sense will be the task of this whole book, a task that can be only very imperfectly accomplished within its limits.

The philosophy of beauty is a theory of values.

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[1] From *The Sense of Beauty;* copyright, 1896, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

The historical titles of our subject may give us a hint towards the beginning of such a definition. Many writers of the last century called the philosophy of beauty *Criticism*, and the word is still retained as the title for the reasoned appreciation of works of art. We could hardly speak, however, of delight in nature as criticism. A sunset is not criticised; it is felt and enjoyed. The word "criticism," used on such an occasion, would emphasize too much the element of deliberate judgment and of comparison with standards. Beauty, although often so described, is seldom so perceived, and all the greatest excellences of nature and art are so far from being approved of by a rule that they themselves furnish the standard and ideal by which critics measure inferior effects.

This age of science and of nomenclature has accordingly adopted a more learned word, *Æsthetics*, that is, the theory of perception or of susceptibility. If criticism is too narrow a word, pointing exclusively to our more artificial judgments, æsthetics seems to be too broad and to include within its sphere all pleasures and pains, if not all perceptions whatsoever. Kant used it, as we know, for his theory of time and space as forms of all perception; and it has at times been narrowed into an equivalent for the philosophy of art.

If we combine, however, the etymological meaning of criticism with that of æsthetics, we shall unite two essential qualities of the theory of beauty. Criticism implies judgment, and æsthetics perception. To get the common ground, that of perceptions which are critical, or judgments which are perceptions, we must widen our notion of deliberate criticism so as to include those judgments of value which are instinctive and immediate, that is, to include pleasures and pains; and at the same time we must narrow our notion of æsthetics

so as to exclude all perceptions which are not appreciations, which do not find a value in their objects. We thus reach the sphere of critical or appreciative perception, which is, roughly speaking, what we mean to deal with. And retaining the word "æsthetics," which is now current, we may therefore say that æsthetics is concerned with the perception of values. The meaning and conditions of value is, then, what we must first consider.

Since the days of Descartes it has been a conception familiar to philosophers that every visible event in nature might be explained by previous visible events, and that all the motions, for instance, of the tongue in speech, or of the hand in painting, might have merely physical causes. If consciousness is thus accessory to life and not essential to it, the race of man might have existed upon the earth and acquired all the arts necessary for its subsistence without possessing a single sensation, idea, or emotion. Natural selection might have secured the survival of those automata which made useful reactions upon their environment. An instinct of self-preservation would have been developed, dangers would have been shunned without being feared, and injuries revenged without being felt.

In such a world there might have come to be the most perfect organization. There would have been what we should call the expression of the deepest interests and the apparent pursuit of conceived goods. For there would have been spontaneous and ingrained tendencies to avoid certain contingencies and to produce others; all the dumb show and evidence of thinking would have been patent to the observer. Yet there would surely have been no thinking, no expectation, and no conscious achievement in the whole process.

The onlooker might have feigned ends and objects of

forethought, as we do in the case of the water that seeks its own level, or in that of the vacuum which nature abhors. But the particles of matter would have remained unconscious of their collocation, and all nature would have been insensible of their changing arrangement. We only, the possible spectators of that process, by virtue of our own interests and habits, could see any progress or culmination in it. We should see culmination where the result attained satisfied our practical or æsthetic demands, and progress wherever such a satisfaction was approached. But apart from ourselves, and our human bias, we can see in such a mechanical world no element of value whatever. In removing consciousness, we have removed the possibility of worth.

But it is not only in the absence of all consciousness that value would be removed from the world; by a less violent abstraction from the totality of human experience, we might conceive beings of a purely intellectual cast, minds in which the transformations of nature were mirrored without any emotion. Every event would then be noted, its relations would be observed, its recurrence might even be expected; but all this would happen without a shadow of desire, of pleasure, or of regret. No event would be repulsive, no situation terrible. We might, in a word, have a world of idea without a world of will. In this case, as completely as if consciousness were absent altogether, all value and excellence would be gone. So that for the existence of good in any form it is not merely consciousness but emotional consciousness that is needed. Observation will not do, appreciation is required.

§ 2. We may therefore at once assert this axiom, important for all moral philosophy and fatal to certain

stubborn incoherences of thought, that there is no value apart from some appreciation of it, and no good apart from some preference of it before its absence or its opposite. In appreciation, in preference, lies the root and essence of all excellence. Or, as Spinoza clearly expresses it, we desire nothing because it is good, but it is good only because we desire it.

Preference is ultimately irrational.

It is true that in the absence of an instinctive reaction we can still apply these epithets by an appeal to usage. We may agree that an action is bad, or a building good, because we recognize in them a character which we have learned to designate by that adjective; but unless there is in us some trace of passionate reprobation or of sensible delight, there is no moral or æsthetic judgment. It is all a question of propriety of speech, and of the empty titles of things. The verbal and mechanical proposition, that passes for judgment of worth, is the great cloak of ineptitude in these matters. Insensibility is very quick in the conventional use of words. If we appealed more often to actual feeling, our judgments would be more diverse, but they would be more legitimate and instructive. Verbal judgments are often useful instruments of thought, but it is not by them that worth can ultimately be determined.

Values spring from the immediate and inexplicable reaction of vital impulse, and from the irrational part of our nature. The rational part is by its essence relative; it leads us from data to conclusions, or from parts to wholes; it never furnishes the data with which it works. If any preference or precept were declared to be ultimate and primitive, it would thereby be declared to be irrational, since mediation, inference, and synthesis are the essence of rationality. The ideal of rationality is itself as arbitrary, as much dependent on

the needs of a finite organization, as any other ideal. Only as ultimately securing tranquillity of mind, which the philosopher instinctively pursues, has it for him any necessity. In spite of the verbal propriety of saying that reason demands rationality, what really demands rationality, what makes it a good and indispensable thing and gives it all its authority, is not its own nature, but our need of it both in safe and economical action and in the pleasures of comprehension.

It is evident that beauty is a species of value, and what we have said of value in general applies to this particular kind. A first approach to a definition of beauty has therefore been made by the exclusion of all intellectual judgments, all judgments of matter of fact or of relation. To substitute judgments of fact for judgments of value, is a sign of a pedantic and borrowed criticism. If we approach a work of art or nature scientifically, for the sake of its historical connexions or proper classification, we do not approach it æsthetically. The discovery of its date or of its author may be otherwise interesting; it only remotely affects our æsthetic appreciation by adding to the direct effect certain associations. If the direct effect were absent, and the object in itself uninteresting, the circumstances would be immaterial. Molière's *Misanthrope* says to the court poet who commends his sonnet as written in a quarter of an hour,

> Voyons, monsieur, le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire,

and so we might say to the critic that sinks into the archæologist, show us the work, and let the date alone.

In an opposite direction the same substitution of facts for values makes its appearance, whenever the reproduction of fact is made the sole standard of artistic excellence. Many half-trained observers condemn

the work of some naïve or fanciful masters with a sneer, because, as they truly say, it is out of drawing. The implication is that to be correctly copied from a model is the prerequisite of all beauty. Correctness is, indeed, an element of effect and one which, in respect to familiar objects, is almost indispensable, because its absence would cause a disappointment and dissatisfaction incompatible with enjoyment. We learn to value truth more and more as our love and knowledge of nature increase. But fidelity is a merit only because it is in this way a factor in our pleasure. It stands on a level with all other ingredients of effect. When a man raises it to a solitary pre-eminence and becomes incapable of appreciating anything else, he betrays the decay of æsthetic capacity. The scientific habit in him inhibits the artistic.

That facts have a value of their own, at once complicates and explains this question. We are naturally pleased by every perception, and recognition and surprise are particularly acute sensations. When we see a striking truth in any imitation, we are therefore delighted, and this kind of pleasure is very legitimate, and enters into the best effects of all the representative arts. Truth and realism are therefore æsthetically good, but they are not all-sufficient, since the representation of everything is not equally pleasing and effective. The fact that resemblance is a source of satisfaction justifies the critic in demanding it, while the æsthetic insufficiency of such veracity shows the different value of truth in science and in art. Science is the response to the demand for information, and in it we ask for the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Art is the response to the demand for entertainment, for the stimulation of our senses and imagination, and truth enters into it only as it subserves these ends.

Even the scientific value of truth is not, however, ultimate or absolute. It rests partly on practical, partly on æsthetic interests. As our ideas are gradually brought into conformity with the facts by the painful process of selection,—for intuition runs equally into truth and into error, and can settle nothing if not controlled by experience,—we gain vastly in our command over our environment. This is the fundamental value of natural science, and the fruit it is yielding in our day. We have no better vision of nature and life than some of our predecessors, but we have greater material resources. To know the truth about the composition and history of things is good for this reason. It is also good because of the enlarged horizon it gives us, because the spectacle of nature is a marvellous and fascinating one, full of a serious sadness and large peace, which gives us back our birthright as children of the planet and naturalizes us upon the earth. This is the poetic value of the scientific *Weltanschauung*. From these two benefits, the practical and the imaginative, all the value of truth is derived.

Æsthetic and moral judgments are accordingly to be classed together in contrast to judgments intellectual; they are both judgments of value, while intellectual judgments are judgments of fact. If the latter have any value, it is only derivative, and our whole intellectual life has its only justification in its connexion with our pleasures and pains.

§ 3. The relation between æsthetic and moral judgments, between the spheres of the beautiful and the good, is close, but the distinction between them is important. One factor of this distinction is that while æsthetic judgments are mainly positive, that is, perceptions of good, moral judgments are mainly and fundamen-

Contrast between moral and æsthetic values.

tally negative, or perceptions of evil. Another factor of the distinction is that whereas, in the perception of beauty, our judgment is necessarily intrinsic and based on the character of the immediate experience, and never consciously on the idea of an eventual utility in the object, judgments about moral worth, on the contrary, are always based, when they are positive, upon the consciousness of benefits probably involved. Both these distinctions need some elucidation.

Hedonistic ethics have always had to struggle against the moral sense of mankind. Earnest minds, that feel the weight and dignity of life, rebel against the assertion that the aim of right conduct is enjoyment. Pleasure usually appears to them as a temptation, and they sometimes go so far as to make avoidance of it a virtue. The truth is that morality is not mainly concerned with the attainment of pleasure; it is rather concerned, in all its deeper and more authoritative maxims, with the prevention of suffering. There is something artificial in the deliberate pursuit of pleasure; there is something absurd in the obligation to enjoy oneself. We feel no duty in that direction; we take to enjoyment naturally enough after the work of life is done, and the freedom and spontaneity of our pleasures is what is most essential to them.

The sad business of life is rather to escape certain dreadful evils to which our nature exposes us,—death, hunger, disease, weariness, isolation, and contempt. By the awful authority of these things, which stand like spectres behind every moral injunction, conscience in reality speaks, and a mind which they have duly impressed cannot but feel, by contrast, the hopeless triviality of the search for pleasure. It cannot but feel that a life abandoned to amusement and to changing impulses must run unawares into fatal dangers. The

moment, however, that society emerges from the early pressure of the environment and is tolerably secure against primary evils, morality grows lax. The forms that life will farther assume are not to be imposed by moral authority, but are determined by the genius of the race, the opportunities of the moment, and the tastes and resources of individual minds. The reign of duty gives place to the reign of freedom, and the law and the covenant to the dispensation of grace.

The appreciation of beauty and its embodiment in the arts are activities which belong to our holiday life, when we are redeemed for the moment from the shadow of evil and the slavery to fear, and are following the bent of our nature where it chooses to lead us. The values, then, with which we here deal are positive; they were negative in the sphere of morality. The ugly is hardly an exception, because it is not the cause of any real pain. In itself it is rather a source of amusement. If its suggestions are vitally repulsive, its presence becomes a real evil towards which we assume a practical and moral attitude. And, correspondingly, the pleasant is never, as we have seen, the object of a truly moral injunction.

§ 4. We have here, then, an important element of the distinction between æsthetic and moral values. It is the same that has been pointed to in the famous contrast between work and play. These terms may be used in different senses and their importance in moral classification differs with the meaning attached to them. We may call everything play which is useless activity, exercise that springs from the physiological impulse to discharge the energy which the exigencies of life have not called out. Work will then be all action that is necessary or useful for life. Evi-

Work and play.

dently if work and play are thus objectively distinguished as useful and useless action, work is a eulogistic term and play a disparaging one. It would be better for us that all our energy should be turned to account, that none of it should be wasted in aimless motion. Play, in this sense, is a sign of imperfect adaptation. It is proper to childhood, when the body and mind are not yet fit to cope with the environment, but it is unseemly in manhood and pitiable in old age, because it marks an atrophy of human nature, and a failure to take hold of the opportunities of life.

Play is thus essentially frivolous. Some persons, understanding the term in this sense, have felt an aversion, which every liberal mind will share, to classing social pleasures, art, and religion under the head of play, and by that epithet condemning them, as a certain school seems to do, to gradual extinction as the race approaches maturity. But if all the useless ornaments of our life are to be cut off in the process of adaptation, evolution would impoverish instead of enriching our nature. Perhaps that is the tendency of evolution, and our barbarous ancestors amid their toils and wars, with their flaming passions and mythologies, lived better lives than are reserved to our well-adapted descendants.

We may be allowed to hope, however, that some imagination may survive parasitically even in the most serviceable brain. Whatever course history may take, —and we are not here concerned with prophecy,—the question of what is desirable is not affected. To condemn spontaneous and delightful occupations because they are useless for self-preservation shows an uncritical prizing of life irrespective of its content. For such a system the worthiest function of the universe should be to establish perpetual motion. Uselessness is a fatal

accusation to bring against any act which is done for its presumed utility, but those which are done for their own sake are their own justification.

At the same time there is an undeniable propriety in calling all the liberal and imaginative activities of man play, because they are spontaneous, and not carried on under pressure of external necessity or danger. Their utility for self-preservation may be very indirect and accidental, but they are not worthless for that reason. On the contrary, we may measure the degree of happiness and civilization which any race has attained by the proportion of its energy which is devoted to free and generous pursuits, to the adornment of life and the culture of the imagination. For it is in the spontaneous play of his faculties that man finds himself and his happiness. Slavery is the most degrading condition of which he is capable, and he is as often a slave to the niggardness of the earth and the inclemency of heaven, as to a master or an institution. He is a slave when all his energy is spent in avoiding suffering and death, when all his action is imposed from without, and no breath or strength is left him for free enjoyment.

Work and play here take on a different meaning, and become equivalent to servitude and freedom. The change consists in the subjective point of view from which the distinction is now made. We no longer mean by work all that is done usefully, but only what is done unwillingly and by the spur of necessity. By play we are designating, no longer what is done fruitlessly, but whatever is done spontaneously and for its own sake, whether it have or not an ulterior utility. Play, in this sense, may be our most useful occupation. So far would a gradual adaptation to the environment be from making this play obsolete, that it would tend to abolish work, and to make play universal. For with

the elimination of all the conflicts and errors of instinct, the race would do spontaneously whatever conduced to its welfare and we should live safely and prosperously without external stimulus or restraint.

§ 5. In this second and subjective sense, then, work is the disparaging term and play the eulogistic one. All who feel the dignity and importance of the things of the imagination, need not hesitate to adopt the classification which designates them as play. We point out thereby, not that they have no value, but that their value is intrinsic, that in them is one of the sources of all worth. Evidently all values must be ultimately intrinsic. The useful is good because of the excellence of its consequences; but these must somewhere cease to be merely useful in their turn, or only excellent as means; somewhere we must reach the good that is good in itself and for its own sake, else the whole process is futile, and the utility of our first object illusory. We here reach the second factor in our distinction, between æsthetic and moral values, which regards their immediacy.

All values are in one sense æsthetic.

If we attempt to remove from life all its evils, as the popular imagination has done at times, we shall find little but æsthetic pleasures remaining to constitute unalloyed happiness. The satisfaction of the passions and the appetites, in which we chiefly place earthly happiness, themselves take on an æsthetic tinge when we remove ideally the possibility of loss or variation. What could the Olympians honour in one another or the seraphim worship in God except the embodiment of eternal attributes, of essences which, like beauty, make us happy only in contemplation? The glory of heaven could not be otherwise symbolized than by light and music. Even the knowledge of truth, which the most

sober theologians made the essence of the beatific vision, is an æsthetic delight; for when the truth has no further practical utility, it becomes a landscape. The delight of it is imaginative and the value of it æsthetic.

This reduction of all values to immediate appreciations, to sensuous or vital activities, is so inevitable that it has struck even the minds most courageously rationalistic. Only for them, instead of leading to the liberation of æsthetic goods from practical entanglements and their establishment as the only pure and positive values in life, this analysis has led rather to the denial of all pure and positive goods altogether. Such thinkers naturally assume that moral values are intrinsic and supreme; and since these moral values would not arise but for the existence or imminence of physical evils, they embrace the paradox that without evil no good whatever is conceivable.

The harsh requirements of apologetics have no doubt helped them to this position, from which one breath of spring or the sight of one well-begotten creature should be enough to dislodge them. Their ethical temper and the fetters of their imagination forbid them to reconsider their original assumption and to conceive that morality is a means and not an end; that it is the price of human non-adaptation, and the consequence of the original sin of unfitness. It is the compression of human conduct within the narrow limits of the safe and possible. Remove danger, remove pain, remove the occasion of pity, and the need of morality is gone. To say "thou shalt not" would then be an impertinence.

But this elimination of precept would not be a cessation of life. The senses would still be open, the instincts would still operate, and lead all creatures to the haunts and occupations that befitted them. The variety of nature and the infinity of art, with the companionship

of our fellows, would fill the leisure of that ideal existence. These are the elements of our positive happiness, the things which, amid a thousand vexations and vanities, make the clear profit of living.

§ 6. Not only are the various satisfactions which morals are meant to secure æsthetic in the last analysis, but when the conscience is formed, and right principles acquire an immediate authority, our attitude to these principles becomes æsthetic also. Honour, truthfulness, and cleanliness are obvious examples. When the absence of these virtues causes an instinctive disgust, as it does in well-bred people, the reaction is essentially æsthetic, because it is not based on reflection and benevolence, but on constitutional sensitiveness. This æsthetic sensitiveness is, however, properly enough called moral, because it is the effect of conscientious training and is more powerful for good in society than laborious virtue, because it is much more constant and catching. It is καλοκἀγαθία, the æsthetic demand for the morally good, and perhaps the finest flower of human nature.

Æsthetic consecration of general principles.

But this tendency of representative principles to become independent powers and acquire intrinsic value is sometimes mischievous. It is the foundation of the conflicts between sentiment and justice, between intuitive and utilitarian morals. Every human reform is the reassertion of the primary interests of man against the authority of general principles which have ceased to represent those interests fairly, but which still obtain the idolatrous veneration of mankind. Nor are chivalry and religion alone liable to fall into this moral superstition. It arises wherever an abstract good is substituted for its concrete equivalent. The miser's

fallacy is the typical case, and something very like it is the ethical principle of half our respectable population. To the exercise of certain useful habits men come to sacrifice the advantage which was the original basis and justification of those habits. Minute knowledge is pursued at the expense of largeness of mind, and riches at the expense of comfort and freedom.

This error is all the more specious when the derived aim has in itself some æsthetic charm, such as belongs to the Stoic idea of playing one's part in a vast drama of things, irrespective of any advantage thereby accruing to any one; somewhat as the miser's passion is rendered a little normal when his eye is fascinated not merely by the figures of a bank account, but by the glitter of the yellow gold. And the vanity of playing a tragic part and the glory of conscious self-sacrifice have the same immediate fascination. Many irrational maxims thus acquire a kind of nobility. An object is chosen as the highest good which has not only a certain representative value, but also an intrinsic one,—which is not merely a method for the realization of other values, but a value in its own realization.

Obedience to God is for the Christian, as conformity to the laws of nature or reason is for the Stoic, an attitude which has a certain emotional and passionate worth, apart from its original justification by maxims of utility. This emotional and passionate force is the essence of fanaticism, it makes imperatives categorical, and gives them absolute sway over the conscience in spite of their one-sidedness and their injustice to the manifold demands of human nature.

Obedience to God or reason can originally recommend itself to a man only as the surest and ultimately least painful way of balancing his aims and synthesizing his desires. So necessary is this sanction even to the most

impetuous natures, that no martyr would go to the stake if he did not believe that the powers of nature, in the day of judgment, would be on his side. But the human mind is a turbulent commonwealth, and the laws that make for the greatest good cannot be established in it without some partial sacrifice, without the suppression of many particular impulses. Hence the voice of reason or the command of God, which makes for the maximum ultimate satisfaction, finds itself opposed by sundry scattered and refractory forces, which are henceforth denominated bad. The unreflective conscience, forgetting the vicarious source of its own excellence, then assumes a solemn and incomprehensible immediacy, as if its decrees were absolute and intrinsically authoritative, not of to-day or yesterday, and no one could tell whence they had arisen. Instinct can all the more easily produce this mystification when it calls forth an imaginative activity full of interest and eager passion. This effect is conspicuous in the absolutist conscience, both devotional and rationalistic, as also in the passion of love. For in all these a certain individuality, definiteness, and exclusiveness is given to the pursued object which is very favourable to zeal, and the heat of passion melts together the various processes of volition into the consciousness of one adorable influence.

However deceptive these complications may prove to men of action and eloquence, they ought not to impose on the critic of human nature. Evidently what value general goods do not derive from the particular satisfactions they stand for, they possess in themselves as ideas pleasing and powerful over the imagination. This intrinsic advantage of certain principles and methods is none the less real for being in a sense æsthetic. Only a sordid utilitarianism that subtracts the imagination

from human nature, or at least slurs over its immense contribution to our happiness, could fail to give these principles the preference over others practically as good.

If it could be shown, for instance, that monarchy was as apt, in a given case, to secure the public well-being as some other form of government, monarchy should be preferred, and would undoubtedly be established, on account of its imaginative and dramatic superiority. But if, blinded by this somewhat ethereal advantage, a party sacrificed to it important public interests, the injustice would be manifest. In a doubtful case, a nation decides, not without painful conflicts, how much it will sacrifice to its sentimental needs. The important point is to remember that the representative or practical value of a principle is one thing, and its intrinsic or æsthetic value is another, and that the latter can be justly counted only as an item in its favour to be weighed against possible external disadvantages. Whenever this comparison and balancing of ultimate benefits of every kind is angrily dismissed in favour of some absolute principle, laid down in contempt of human misery and happiness, we have a personal and fantastic system of ethics, without practical sanctions. It is an evidence that the superstitious imagination has invaded the sober and practical domain of morals.

Æsthetic and physical pleasure.

§ 7. We have now separated with some care intellectual and moral judgments from the sphere of our subject, and found that we are to deal only with perceptions of value, and with these only when they are positive and immediate. But even with these distinctions the most remarkable characteristic of the sense of beauty remains undefined. All pleasures are intrinsic and positive values, but all pleasures are not perceptions of beauty. Pleasure

is indeed the essence of that perception, but there is evidently in this particular pleasure a complication which is not present in others and which is the basis of the distinction made by consciousness and language between it and the rest. It will be instructive to notice the degrees of this difference.

The bodily pleasures are those least resembling perceptions of beauty. By bodily pleasures we mean, of course, more than pleasures with a bodily seat; for that class would include them all, as well as all forms and elements of consciousness. Æsthetic pleasures have physical conditions, they depend on the activity of the eye and the ear, of the memory and the other ideational functions of the brain. But we do not connect those pleasures with their seats except in physiological studies; the ideas with which æsthetic pleasures are associated are not the ideas of their bodily causes. The pleasures we call physical, and regard as low, on the contrary, are those which call our attention to some part of our own body, and which make no object so conspicuous to us as the organ in which they arise.

There is here, then, a very marked distinction between physical and æsthetic pleasure; the organs of the latter must be transparent, they must not intercept our attention, but carry it directly to some external object. The greater dignity and range of æsthetic pleasure is thus made very intelligible. The soul is glad, as it were, to forget its connexion with the body and to fancy that it can travel over the world with the liberty with which it changes the objects of its thought. The mind passes from China to Peru without any conscious change in the local tensions of the body. This illusion of disembodiment is very exhilarating, while immersion in the flesh and confinement to some organ gives a tone of grossness and selfishness to our consciousness. The generally

meaner associations of physical pleasures also help to explain their comparative crudity.

§ 8. The distinction between pleasure and the sense of beauty has sometimes been said to consist in the unselfishness of æsthetic satisfaction. In other pleasures, it is said, we gratify our senses and passions; in the contemplation of beauty we are raised above ourselves, the passions are silenced and we are happy in the recognition of a good that we do not seek to possess. The painter does not look at a spring of water with the eyes of a thirsty man, nor at a beautiful woman with those of a satyr. The difference lies, it is urged, in the impersonality of the enjoyment. But this distinction is one of intensity and delicacy, not of nature, and it seems satisfactory only to the least æsthetic minds.[2]

The differentia of æsthetic pleasure not its disinterestedness.

In the second place, the supposed disinterestedness of æsthetic delights is not truly fundamental. Appreciation of a picture is not identical with the desire to buy it, but it is, or ought to be, closely related and preliminary to that desire. The beauties of nature and of the plastic arts are not consumed by being enjoyed; they retain all the efficacy to impress a second beholder. But this cir-

[2] Schopenhauer, indeed, who makes much of it, was a good critic, but his psychology suffered much from the pessimistic generalities of his system. It concerned him to show that the will was bad, and, as he felt beauty to be a good if not a holy thing, he hastened to convince himself that it came from the supression of the will. But even in his system this suppression is only relative. The desire of individual objects, indeed, is absent in the perception of beauty, but there is still present that initial love of the general type and principles of things which is the first illusion of the absolute, and drives it on to the fatal experiment of creation. So that, apart from Schopenhauer's mythology, we have even in him the recognition that beauty gives satisfaction to some dim and underlying demand of our nature, just as particular objects give more special and momentary pleasures to our individualized wills. His psychology was, however, far too vague and general to undertake an analysis of those mysterious feelings.

cumstance is accidental, and those æsthetic objects which depend upon change and are exhausted in time, as are all performances, are things the enjoyment of which is an object of rivalry and is coveted as much as any other pleasure. And even plastic beauties can often not be enjoyed except by a few, on account of the necessity of travel or other difficulties of access, and then this æsthetic enjoyment is as selfishly pursued as the rest.

The truth which the theory is trying to state seems rather to be that when we seek æsthetic pleasures we have no further pleasure in mind; that we do not mix up the satisfactions of vanity and proprietorship with the delight of contemplation. This is true, but it is true at bottom of all pursuits and enjoyments. Every real pleasure is in one sense disinterested. It is not sought with ulterior motives, and what fills the mind is no calculation, but the image of an object or event, suffused with emotion. A sophisticated consciousness may often take the idea of self as the touchstone of its inclinations; but this self, for the gratification and aggrandizement of which a man may live, is itself only a complex of aims and memories, which once had their direct objects, in which he had taken a spontaneous and unselfish interest. The gratifications which, merged together, make the selfishness are each of them ingenuous, and no more selfish than the most altruistic, impersonal emotion. The content of selfishness is a mass of unselfishness. There is no reference to the nominal essence called oneself either in one's appetites or in one's natural affections; yet a man absorbed in his meat and drink, in his houses and lands, in his children and dogs, is called selfish because these interests, although natural and instinctive in him, are not shared by others. The unselfish man is he whose nature has a more universal direction, whose interests are more widely diffused.

But as impersonal thoughts are such only in their object, not in their subject or agent, since all thoughts are the thoughts of somebody: so also unselfish interests have to be somebody's interests. If we were not interested in beauty, if it were of no concern to our happiness whether things were beautiful or ugly, we should manifest not the maximum, but the total absence of æsthetic faculty. The disinterestedness of this pleasure is, therefore, that of all primitive and intuitive satisfactions, which are in no way conditioned by a reference to an artificial general concept, like that of the self, all the potency of which must itself be derived from the independent energy of its component elements. I care about myself because "myself" is a name for the things I have at heart. To set up the verbal figment of personality and make it an object of concern apart from the interests which were its content and substance, turns the moralist into a pedant, and ethics into a superstition. The self which is the object of *amour propre* is an idol of the tribe, and needs to be disintegrated into the primitive objective interests that underlie it before the cultus of it can be justified by reason.

§ 9. The supposed disinterestedness of our love of beauty passes into another characteristic of it often regarded as essential,—its universality. The pleasures of the senses have, it is said, no dogmatism in them; that anything gives me pleasure involves no assertion about its capacity to give pleasure to another. But when I judge a thing to be beautiful, my judgment means that the thing is beautiful in itself, or (what is the same thing more critically expressed) that it should seem so to everybody. The claim to universality is, according to this doctrine, the essence of the

The differentia of æsthetic pleasure not its universality.

æsthetic; what makes the perception of beauty a judgment rather than a sensation. All æsthetic precepts would be impossible, and all criticism arbitrary and subjective, unless we admit a paradoxical universality in our judgment, the philosophical implications of which we may then go on to develop. But we are fortunately not required to enter the labyrinth into which this method leads; there is a much simpler and clearer way of studying such questions, which is to challenge and analyze the assertion before us and seek its basis in human nature. Before this is done, we should run the risk of expanding a natural misconception or inaccuracy of thought into an inveterate and pernicious prejudice by making it the centre of an elaborate construction.

That the claim of universality is such a natural inaccuracy will not be hard to show. There is notoriously no great agreement upon æsthetic matters; and such agreement as there is, is based upon similarity of origin, nature, and circumstance among men, a similarity which, where it exists, tends to bring about identity in all judgments and feelings. It is unmeaning to say that what is beautiful to one man *ought* to be beautiful to another. If their senses are the same, their associations and dispositions similar, then the same thing will certainly be beautiful to both. If their natures are different, the form which to one will be entrancing will be to another even invisible, because his classifications and discriminations in perception will be different, and he may see a hideous detached fragment or a shapeless aggregate of things, in what to another is a perfect whole—so entirely are the unities of objects unities of function and use. It is absurd to say that what is invisible to a given being *ought* to seem beautiful to him. Evidently this obligation of recognizing the same qualities is conditioned by the possession of the same faculties. But no two men

have exactly the same faculties, nor can things have for any two exactly the same values.

What is loosely expressed by saying that any one ought to see this or that beauty is that he would see it if his disposition, training, or attention were what our ideal demands for him; and our ideal of what any one should be has complex but discoverable sources. We take, for instance, a certain pleasure in having our own judgments supported by those of others; we are intolerant, if not of the existence of a nature different from our own, at least of its expression in words and judgments. We are confirmed or made happy in our doubtful opinions by seeing them accepted universally. We are unable to find the basis of our taste in our own experience and therefore refuse to look for it there. If we were sure of our ground, we should be willing to acquiesce in the naturally different feelings and ways of others, as a man who is conscious of speaking his language with the accent of the capital confesses its arbitrariness with gayety, and is pleased and interested in the variations of it he observes in provincials; but the provincial is always zealous to show that he has reason and ancient authority to justify his oddities. So people who have no sensations, and do not know why they judge, are always trying to show that they judge by universal reason.

Thus the frailty and superficiality of our own judgments cannot brook contradiction. We abhor another man's doubt when we cannot tell him why we ourselves believe. Our ideal of other men tends therefore to include the agreement of their judgments with our own; and although we might acknowledge the fatuity of this demand in regard to natures very different from the human, we may be unreasonable enough to require that all races should admire the same style of architecture, and all ages the same poets.

The great actual unity of human taste within the range of conventional history helps the pretension. But in principle it is untenable. Nothing has less to do with the real merit of a work of imagination than the capacity of all men to appreciate it; the true test is the degree and kind of satisfaction it can give to him who appreciates it most. The symphony would lose nothing if half mankind had always been deaf, as nine-tenths of them actually are to the intricacies of its harmonies; but it would have lost much if no Beethoven had existed. And more: incapacity to appreciate certain types of beauty may be the condition *sine qua non* for the appreciation of another kind; the greatest capacity both for enjoyment and creation is highly specialized and exclusive, and hence the greatest ages of art have often been strangely intolerant.

The invectives of one school against another, perverse as they are philosophically, are artistically often signs of health, because they indicate a vital appreciation of certain kinds of beauty, a love of them that has grown into a jealous passion. The architects that have pieced out the imperfections of ancient buildings with their own thoughts, like Charles V. when he raised his massive palace beside the Alhambra, may be condemned from a certain point of view. They marred much by their interference; but they showed a splendid confidence in their own intuitions, a proud assertion of their own taste, which is the greatest evidence of æsthetic sincerity. On the contrary, our own gropings, eclecticism, and archæology are the symptoms of impotence. If we were less learned and less just, we might be more efficient. If our appreciation were less general, it might be more real, and if we trained our imagination into exclusivness, it might attain to character.

§ 10. There is, however, something more in the claim to universality in æsthetic judgments than the desire to generalize our own opinions. There is the expression of a curious but well-known psychological phenomenon, viz., the transformation of an element of sensation into the quality of a thing. If we say that other men should see the beauties we see, it is because we think those beauties *are in the object,* like its colour, proportion, or size. Our judgment appears to us merely the perception and discovery of an external existence, of the real excellence that is without. But this notion is radically absurd and contradictory. Beauty, as we have seen, is a value; it cannot be conceived as an independent existence which affects our senses and which we consequently perceive. It exists in perception, and cannot exist otherwise. A beauty not perceived is a pleasure not felt, and a contradiction. But modern philosophy has taught us to say the same thing of every element of the perceived world; all are sensations; and their grouping into objects imagined to be permanent and external is the work of certain habits of our intelligence. We should be incapable of surveying or retaining the diffused experiences of life, unless we organized and classified them, and out of the chaos of impressions framed the world of conventional and recognizable objects.

The differentia of æsthetic pleasure: its objectification.

How this is done is explained by the current theories of perception. External objects usually affect various senses at once, the impressions of which are thereby associated. Repeated experiences of one object are also associated on account of their similarity; hence a double tendency to merge and unify into a single percept, to which a name is attached, the group of those memories and reactions which in fact had one external thing for

their cause. But this percept, once formed, is clearly different from those particular experiences out of which it grew. It is permanent, they are variable. They are but partial views and glimpses of it. The constituted notion therefore comes to be the reality, and the materials of it merely the appearance. The distinction between substance and quality, reality and appearance, matter and mind, has no other origin.

The objects thus conceived and distinguished from our ideas of them, are at first compacted of all the impressions, feelings, and memories, which offer themselves for association and fall within the vortex of the amalgamating imagination. Every sensation we get from a thing is originally treated as one of its qualities. Experiment, however, and the practical need of a simpler conception of the structure of objects lead us gradually to reduce the qualities of the object to a minimum, and to regard most perceptions as an effect of those few qualities upon us. These few primary qualities, like extension which we persist in treating as independently real and as the quality of a substance, are those which suffice to explain the order of our experiences. All the rest, like colour, are relegated to the subjective sphere, as merely effects upon our minds, and apparent or secondary qualities of the object.

But this distinction has only a practical justification. Convenience and economy of thought alone determine what combination of our sensations we shall continue to objectify and treat as the cause of the rest. The right and tendency to be objective is equal in all, since they are all prior to the artifice of thought by which we separate the concept from its materials, the thing from our experiences.

The qualities which we now conceive to belong to real objects are for the most part images of sight and touch.

One of the first classes of effects to be treated as secondary were naturally pleasures and pains, since it could commonly conduce very little to intelligent and successful action to conceive our pleasures and pains as resident in objects. But emotions are essentially capable of objectification, as well as impressions of sense; and one may well believe that a primitive and inexperienced consciousness would rather people the world with ghosts of its own terrors and passions than with projections of those luminous and mathematical concepts which as yet it could hardly have formed.

This animistic and mythological habit of thought still holds its own at the confines of knowledge, where mechanical explanations are not found. In ourselves, where nearness makes observation difficult, in the intricate chaos of animal and human life, we still appeal to the efficacy of will and ideas, as also in the remote night of cosmic and religious problems. But in all the intermediate realm of vulgar day, where mechanical science has made progress, the inclusion of emotional or passionate elements in the concept of the reality would be now an extravagance. Here our idea of things is composed exclusively of perceptual elements, of the ideas of form and of motion.

The beauty of objects, however, forms an exception to this rule. Beauty is an emotional element, a pleasure of ours, which nevertheless we regard as a quality of things. But we are now prepared to understand the nature of this exception. It is the survival of a tendency originally universal to make every effect of a thing upon us a constituent of its conceived nature. The scientific idea of a thing is a great abstraction from the mass of perceptions and reactions which that thing produces; the æsthetic idea is less abstract, since it retains the emo-

tional reaction, the pleasure of the perception, as an integral part of the conceived thing.

Nor is it hard to find the ground of this survival in the sense of beauty of an objectification of feeling elsewhere extinct. Most of the pleasures which objects cause are easily distinguished and separated from the perception of the object: the object has to be applied to a particular organ, like the palate, or swallowed like wine, or used and operated upon in some way before the pleasure arises. The cohesion is therefore slight between the pleasure and the other associated elements of sense; the pleasure is separated in time from the perception, or it is localized in a different organ, and consequently is at once recognized as an effect and not as a quality of the object. But when the process of perception itself is pleasant, as it may easily be, when the intellectual operation, by which the elements of sense are associated and projected, and the concept of the form and substance of the thing produced, is naturally delightful, then we have a pleasure intimately bound up in the thing, inseparable from its character and constitution, the seat of which in us is the same as the seat of the perception. We naturally fail, under these circumstances, to separate the pleasure from the other objectified feelings. It becomes, like them, a quality of the object, which we distinguish from pleasures not so incorporated in the perception of things, by giving it the name of beauty.

The definition of beauty.

§ 11. We have now reached our definition of beauty, which, in the terms of our successive analysis and narrowing of the conception, is value positive, intrinsic, and objectified. Or, in less technical language, Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing.

This definition is intended to sum up a variety of distinctions and identifications which should perhaps be here more explicitly set down. Beauty is a value, that is, it is not a perception of a matter of fact or of a relation: it is an emotion, an affection of our volitional and appreciative nature. An object cannot be beautiful if it can give pleasure to nobody: a beauty to which all men were forever indifferent is a contradiction in terms.

In the second place, this value is positive, it is the sense of the presence of something good, or (in the case of ugliness) of its absence. It is never the perception of a positive evil, it is never a negative value. That we are endowed with the sense of beauty is a pure gain which brings no evil with it. When the ugly ceases to be amusing or merely uninteresting and becomes disgusting, it becomes indeed a positive evil: but a moral and practical, not an æsthetic one. In æsthetics that saying is true—often so disingenuous in ethics—that evil is nothing but the absence of good: for even the tedium and vulgarity of an existence without beauty is not itself ugly so much as lamentable and degrading. The absence of æsthetic goods is a moral evil: the æsthetic evil is merely relative, and means less of æsthetic good than was expected at the place and time. No form in itself gives pain, although some forms give pain by causing a shock of surprise even when they are really beautiful: as if a mother found a fine bull pup in her child's cradle, when her pain would not be æsthetic in its nature.

Further, this pleasure must not be in the consequence of the utility of the object or event, but in its immediate perception; in other words, beauty is an ultimate good, something that gives satisfaction to a natural function, to some fundamental need or capacity of our minds. Beauty is therefore a positive value that is intrinsic; it is a pleasure. These two circumstances sufficiently sepa-

rate the sphere of æsthetics from that of ethics. Moral values are generally negative, and always remote. Morality has to do with the avoidance of evil and the pursuit of good: æsthetics only with enjoyment.

Finally, the pleasures of sense are distinguished from the perception of beauty, as sensation in general is distinguished from perception; by the objectification of the elements and their appearance as qualities rather of things than of consciousness. The passage from sensation to perception is gradual, and the path may be sometimes retraced: so it is with beauty and the pleasures of sensation. There is no sharp line between them, but it depends upon the degree of objectivity my feeling has attained at the moment whether I say "It pleases me," or "It is beautiful." If I am self-conscious and critical, I shall probably use one phrase; if I am impulsive and susceptible, the other. The more remote, interwoven, and inextricable the pleasure is, the more objective it will appear; and the union of two pleasures often makes one beauty. In Shakespeare's LIVth sonnet are these words:

> O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
> By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
> The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
> For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
> The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
> As the perfumèd tincture of the roses,
> Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
> When summer's breath their maskèd buds discloses.
> But, for their beauty only is their show,
> They live unwooed and unrespected fade;
> Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so:
> Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made.

One added ornament, we see, turns the deep dye, which was but show and mere sensation before, into an element of beauty and reality; and as truth is here the co-opera-

tion of perceptions, so beauty is the co-operation of pleasures. If colour, form, and motion are hardly beautiful without the sweetness of the odour, how much more necessary would they be for the sweetness itself to become a beauty! If we had the perfume in a flask, no one would think of calling it beautiful: it would give us too detached and controllable a sensation. There would be no object in which it could be easily incorporated. But let it float from the garden, and it will add another sensuous charm to objects simultaneously recognized, and help to make them beautiful. Thus beauty is constituted by the objectification of pleasure. It is pleasure objectified.

E. F. Carritt

The Hedonistic-Moral Theory[1]

§ 1. Permanent value of Plato's æsthetics. § 2. He has two theories, which are inconsistent; (*a*) one treats *beauty* as an education. § 3. But this is applied only to 'formal' beauty, artistic and natural. § 4. Modern developments of this view. § 5. (1) Influence of beauty on character. § 6. (2) Influence of national greatness on art. § 7. (3) Dependence of art on social justice. § 8. Connection of beauty and morality. § 9. (*b*) Plato's other doctrine is a condemnation of *art* as an imitation, pleasant but dangerous. § 10. Does art aim at pleasure?—All beauty pleases. § 11. But not all pleasant things are beautiful. § 12. Nor is beauty proportionate to edification. § 13. Modern developments of this second Platonic theory: (1) Tolstoy; (2) Ruskin. § 14. Art for art's sake. § 15. The purgation theory. § 16. Its universal adoption or adaptation. § 17. Its modern rationalisations. § 18. An 'expressionist' interpretation of the doctrine. § 19. Relation of art to morality. § 20. And, in general, of beauty to character.

§ 1. In endeavouring to extract from a discussion of some great æsthetic theories the largest common body of doctrine which we can accept, it will obviously be more useful to attempt a systematic than a chronological arrangement. But it is a lucky, though natural, accident, that the theory presupposed as a first stage in all thought upon the subject was also the earliest in time.

With the historical causes which rendered possible or necessary for a philosopher like Plato his strange philos-

[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *The Theory of Beauty* by E. F. Carritt. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1923.

ophy of art, we are not at all concerned; and hardly more with its apparent affiliation to his metaphysic. For, as Plotinus showed, there was really nothing in that Idealism to involve the degradation of art below science or common perception. "The arts do not simply imitate the visible thing but go back to the principles of its nature."[2] At least one of the reasons—and the one which holds our attention—for the elementary nature of Plato's theory is that he was the first to theorise on the subject. When we find the same view reproduced with far less profundity in later writers, it will be evidence either of *naïveté* in speculation, or of an amiable servility to the master.

§ 2. The text for consideration will be almost entirely the tenth book of the *Republic;* for in the earlier books we are constantly reminded that he is legislating for the nursery or the schoolroom, is applying art to the politic formation of tender characters.

Indeed what we chiefly have to remark in this earlier treatment is a strain of thought found more explicitly in the *Phædrus,* and systematised in Plotinus, which is the germ of most mystical thinking about beauty, especially from later mediæval, or early renaissance, down to quite modern times. This is the doctrine, quite forgotten in the tenth book, that beauty, apart from any conscious allegory or definite moral, is by some secret affinity the nursing mother of truth and goodness; so that man ascends from rung to rung of visible perfection till he reaches the climax of beatific vision,

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[2] *Ennead,* v. viii. 1. Εἰ δέ τις τὰς τέχνας ἀτιμάζει ὅτι μιμούμεναι τὴν φύσιν ποιοῦσι πρῶτον μὲν φατέον καὶ τὰς φύσεις μιμεῖσθαι ἄλλα, ἔπειτα δεῖ εἰδέναι ὡς οὐχ ἁπλῶς τὸ ὁρώμενον μιμοῦνται, ἀλλ' ἀνατρέχουσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐξ ὧν ἡ φύσις, εἶτα καὶ ὅτι πολλὰ γαρ αὐτῶν ποιοῦσι καὶ προστιθέασι δέ, ὅτῳ τί ἐλλείπει, ὡς ἔχουσαι τὸ κάλλος. Cf. Plato himself, *Rep.,* 500*e,* and 402*c,* and 473*a.*

and rests at peace with himself and with his neighbours because in a clear-eyed harmony with the universe. We may not like this comparison of beauty with a ladder, to be kicked down, it would seem, when the summits of philosophy have been scaled; we may see its dangerous tendency to the later utilitarianism; but it is a pleasant reprieve from the harsh sentence on the poets, to hear of a value, even secondary, in mere beauty "like a breeze blowing from goodly places and from earliest childhood leading us quietly into likeness and fellowship and harmony with the beauty of reasonableness; . . . surely one so nurtured would, beyond others, welcome reason when it came to him and know it for his own. Εὐλογία ἄρα καὶ εὐαρμοστία καὶ εὐσχημοσύνη καὶ εὐρυθμία εὐηθείᾳ ἀκολουθεῖ."[3]

§ 3. It seems likely that Plato was able to allow this virtue here to unmoralised beauty because he had not so definitely concentrated his attention as he later does on the beauty of art and indeed of the representative arts alone. Weaving, ceramics, architecture and perhaps dancing, seem to be contemplated; music—wrested, it is true, to an imitative interpretation—is emphasised as educational; the natural beauty of human and animal bodies is expressly mentioned; and there is nothing actually to exclude the beauties of inanimate nature, for which Wordsworth and Ruskin have made

[3] *Rep.*, 400; cf. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, x. All the words used for what Plato considers the edifying elements indicate what we should call formal beauty. This he finds both in the celestial movements (*Timæus*, 47) and in human conduct. Cf. Wordsworth, "Ode to Duty." It is the making or finding of the form for mere disorganised matter,—no bad description of æsthetic experience. But Plato's curious blindness to the fact that this is the essence of all art is shown by his account of *all* poetry as narrative. 392*d*. Cf. *Philebus*, 51; see Chap. VI. So striking is the contrast of these two Platonic views that Volkmann (*Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, ii. § 133) actually uses it to argue a generic difference between art and beauty. Not only is this a strange paradox, but it is not the distinction Plato makes.

out so much stronger a case.[4] But in the condemnation of art in the tenth book nearly all the examples are from the really representative arts of painting and poetry; dancing and music, which, in spite of the mimetic conception of it in Greece, might have suggested some doubts, fall out of sight, beauty (κάλλος) is narrowed into poetry and painting (ποιητικὴ καὶ γραφικὴ), and these by an easy transition become the *imitative* arts (αἱ μιμητικαὶ τέχναι).

Before passing on to consider the more famous and systematic winnowing of art in the later book, we are compelled to consider this educational approval of beauty in the earlier and in the *Phædrus*, by the powerful attraction which it has always had for a certain austere yet sensitive type of mind.

The thesis is that beauty, and in particular the visible beauty of form and grace and the audible beauty of rhythm and melody, especially if any of these be found in nature, dispose men towards right conduct,[5] and, though this is more tentatively suggested, towards true thinking.

§ 4. A variant of the doctrine, not exclusive but complementary of the first form, is that the creation and appreciation of beauty are *symptoms* of highly developed morality. This is the turn given to it by Kant[6] in holding that sensitiveness to the sublime and to nat-

[4] *Rep.*, 401, 412.

[5] Cf. Shakespeare, Sonnet 151:

"Love is too young to know what conscience is;
Yet who knows not, conscience is born of love?"

Æsthetic apprehension of the individual is an activity presupposed, not superseded, by morality and philosophy. It does not presuppose either of them, though what is æsthetically apprehended *may* easily contain both. It is this relation which puzzles Schiller (*Ueber Aesthetische Erziehung*), who never makes up his mind whether the æsthetic activity is a preparation for or a transcending of true morality.

[6] *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, §§ 29 and 59.

ural beauty implies a strong susceptibility to moral ideas; and it is the more prominent side also of Ruskin's ethical treatment of art.[7]

Dante with all his instinctive poetic followers, Spenser,[8] Shelley,[9] Wordsworth,[10] and in a less self-conscious sense St. Francis, form with the two great philosophers a dazzling cloud of witnesses. So we must not forget the solid, if somewhat stolid, body of common opinion upon the other side: that beauty is a snare, that purity is puritanical, that artists—and here Plato[11] is a lost leader—have often much to be forgiven them.

§ 5. Taken in its most literal sense there is no empirical support for the dogma. The inhabitants of beautiful countries or cities are no better than other people, either morally or æsthetically.[12] Possibly Virgil's farmers would have been too good, as well as too happy, if they had realised their advantages.

§ 6. A similar and very common thought is that certain conditions of society are specially favourable, if not necessary, for artistic activity. Thus, to take the theory first in its most general form, it is often said that the spirit of a nation must be profoundly stirred by political, military or scientific achievements, if great works of art are to appear. But the evidence for this connection, if carefully considered, appears inconclu-

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[7] *Modern Painters*, I. Sect. 2, ii. § 4; III. Sect. 1, xv. §§ 9–12; IV. xvii. §§ 30–32; *Two Paths*, i.

[8] *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.*

[9] *Defence of Poetry.*

[10] *Prelude*, ii. 396–418; iii. 127–39; xii. 151–73; *Excursion*, iv. 1207–29.

[11] *Rep.*, 394–95.

[12] Cf. Ruskin's other view (*Lectures on Art* and *Modern Painters*, iv. xiii. 20) which might disarm even Mr. Whistler's *Ten o'Clock*. Cf. Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.*, xiv. (II. p. 32): "The ancient mountains, with all their terrors and all their glories, are pictures to the blind and music to the deaf." Cf. *Anima Poetæ:* "When the country does not benefit it depraves. . . . Hence the violent vindictive passions of many country folk."

sive, or at least shows little more than this: that when works of art arise in the world something else of interest is occurring or, at no long interval, has occurred or is about to occur. But since great art is rarer than interesting events, the converse proposition would be less convincing. It is true that Pheidias was a contemporary of Pericles, but if the Athenian supremacy was more exciting than the Spartan, it was its art that made it so. The times of Dante, of Michelangelo and of Velasquez would not strike us as superlatively interesting but for their art. The Reformation did not produce any mass of great art, say, in Scotland, nor the Revolution in France, nor the War of Independence and the subsequent remarkable activity in America. And though we have recently become aware of a delicate early Christian art, it is hardly more important than that of the pagan decadence, and would certainly not have suggested to us that a new heaven had appeared on earth.

No doubt if moving ideas are in the air, the artist, if he exist, will be apt to be moved by them, and to embody their expression in his works. Yet love, birth and death, suffering and nature, are with us always; they are enough to move man at any time and may be what move him most even when trade is flourishing or liberty expands.[13] And it is just as likely that art may influence practical efficiency as the converse.[14] Of course if a man's preoccupations lead him to identify art with the expression of a certain set of feelings, he will conclude that the prevalence of those feelings is a neces-

[13] Schopenhauer (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Supplement III. ch. xxxi.) remarks that the man of mere talent comes always at the right time, for he is spurred by the will and stimulated by demand, so that he goes hand in hand with the advancing culture of an age, hitting a mark which his contemporaries cannot. But the man of genius hits one they cannot see.

[14] Cf. Plato, *Rep.*, 424c: *οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ κινοῦνται μουσικῆς τρόποι ἄνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων.*

sary condition of art. So great painting and architecture have been confined by the exclusively religious to some fancied 'Age of Faith,' by the enthusiasts of Liberty to republics, and by lovers of established order to an Augustan Age. Yet even in their own sense this is a hazardous conclusion; for though most churches will perhaps be built when there are most worshippers, they may be built with ugly haste; pastorals have been chiefly written by citizens; and drought as well as plenty may stimulate the imagination of living waters.

§ 7. A form of the doctrine, more plausible because unable to be tested, is that with happier and juster social conditions art will be born again; that when masons are well paid they will be sculptors; and that Leeds will have its Parthenon when the Aire is as pure as the Ilissus.

> And what wealth shall then be left us
> When none shall gather gold
> To buy his friend in the market
> And pinch and pine the sold?
>
> Nay, what save the lovely city,
> And the little house on the hill,
> And the wastes and the woodland beauty,
> And the happy fields we till;
>
> And the homes of ancient stories,
> And tombs of the mighty dead;
> And the wise men seeking out marvels,
> And the poet's teeming head;
>
> And the painter's hand of wonder,
> And the marvellous fiddle bow,
> And the banded choirs of music:
> All those that do and know.
>
> For these shall be ours and all men's,
> Nor shall any lack a share
> Of the toil and the gain of living
> In the days when the world grows fair.[15]

[15] W. Morris, *Poems by the Way*—"The Day is Coming."

The beautiful artistic expression of these hopes by Ruskin and William Morris sometimes blinds us to the fact that at least these works of theirs, these touching and stirring aspirations towards some sweet city of Demos, have come to birth in our own day and because of our own surroundings. I have a better faith of the human spirit, and not without witness, than to suppose that either material discomforts or unjust conditions could ever preclude it from the artistic activity. I could as soon think with Hegel that the age of art is past; or that good actions would vanish from the earth because they are so seldom successful; which yet, "by some heavenly chance,"[16] as Plato wonderingly reminds us, spring still from the least congenial soil. Such beliefs came partly from an idealisation of the Middle Ages and partly from the Utopian fancy that the reform of one crying evil will inaugurate the kingdom of heaven. But as the mediæval guilds with their peculiar freedoms and oppressions permitted our great cathedrals, so did the slave labour of Athens, with its own callousness and glory, produce the Acropolis, and that of Egypt the Pyramids. As the Venetian plutocracy had its painters so may the golden age have its poets, who may be less or greater than those who fleeted their time less carelessly.

This much can be said: that the art most congenial to Morris may perhaps demand for its flourishing that just and happy society for which he worked. For in spite of his tender sentiment and his Gothic romance, the beauty that he loved was classical or decorative, not dramatic or sublime;—the beauty of physically perfect human beings, *donne leggiadre* and good men of their hands, happy among the gardens they have planted and

[16] *Rep.*, 366*c*; *Meno*, 99*e*. In the *Ion*, 536*c*, the same expression is used of the artist's inspiration.

the children they have begotten; not the tragic beauty of that poverty and strife and sin from which the world so painfully frees itself. And for a temperament of this kind the stimulating setting is perhaps not the smoke loved by Whistler and Monet, nor the poignant contrasts of industrialism, though even there "cheerfulness will be always breaking in." For it, "The desire of the heart is also the light of the eyes. No scene is continually and untiringly loved, but one rich by joyful human labour; smooth in field; fair in garden; full in orchard; trim, sweet and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence."[17] Perhaps no reforms will universally realise this picture; in any case we shall never have to lament the loss of tragic matter; yet perhaps there is always matter also for the artist of favour and prettiness, "the idle singer"—as none had the right to call Morris save himself—"of an empty day." If the play of the palæstra gave us the athlete statues, the hard toil of the stonecutters' yard[18] gave us the Æginetan pediments and that of the French peasant the beauty of Meunier and of Millet. The world will not '*grow* fair.' And only the artist can make it so. But he always can.[19]

§ 8. And in some such hypothesis as this concerning the relation of beauty to goodness, we must rest: the mind is one, and keen æsthetic sensibilities, cultivated by practice, imply, other things being equal, the power of unselfish sympathy and a nice discrimination of concrete facts. An artist in the best sense ἥττων τῶν καλῶν is not likely to be merely violent or covetous or cruel, nor to satisfy himself with conventional principles and the letter of the law; we should expect of him tact, toler-

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17 Ruskin, *Unto This Last.*
18 Hegel, *Æsthetik*, vol. ii. p. 459.
19 Cf. Mr. Whistler's *Ten o'Clock.*

ance and mercy, and a sensibility to the actual situation.[20] No doubt these qualities will bring their own defects, but the root of all evil is philistinism as Plato describes it: "to believe in nothing but those material things which can be seen and handled, eaten, drunken and lusted after."[21] And of such a character he describes the genesis, how "it grows slack and blind and dull since it is not aroused or strengthened, nor its sensibility clarified by any tincture of art or letters or philosophy."[22]

Coleridge has in his own way summarised the matter well: "Nature has her proper interest, and he will know what it is who believes and feels that everything has a life of its own and that we are all One Life."[23] And, less metaphysically, Shelley:[24] "A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. . . . Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same way as exercise strengthens a limb. A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time,

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[20] Kant, *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, § 29, *Allgemeine Anmerkung:* "The beautiful prepares us to love something, and indeed Nature, disinterestedly; the sublime to value it highly against our natural interests."

[21] Μηδὲν ἄλλο δοκεῖν εἶναι ἀληθὲς ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ σωματοειδές οὗ τις ἂν ἅψαιτο καὶ ἴδοι καὶ πίοι καὶ φάγοι καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀφροδίσια χρήσαιτο.

[22] Οὔτε λόγου μετίσχον, οὔτε τῆς ἄλλης μουσικῆς, ἀσθενές τε καὶ κωφὸν καὶ τυφλὸν γίγνεται, ἅτε οὐκ ἐγειρόμενον οὐδὲ τρεφόμενον οὐδὲ διακαθαιρομένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων. *Republic*, 411. (The διακάθαρσις αἰσθήσεων here spoken of is clearly not a removing.)

[23] To Sotheby, Sept. 1802. *Letters*, i. 403.

[24] *The Defence of Poetry.*

in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in a participation in the cause."

Plato on art.

§ 9. The discussion of Plato's theory of art as developed in the tenth book of the *Republic* is a question logically previous to that of any other because he is constructing less an æsthetic than an anti-æsthetic. He and those who, consciously or not, derive from him, do not so much tell us what art is as that it is nothing, or next to nothing. For since it is the copy of particular objects, which are themselves only copies of the intelligible universals or ideas, it is an illusion three times removed from reality; a level which the *Republic* seems to indicate as the very backward and abysm of being.[25] Art is of course admitted to be pleasant, that is indeed what makes its dangerous importance; but like other pleasant things, wine or dice-playing, it must never be allowed to interfere with our social duties, can hardly be justified indeed as a relaxation, unless for the sake of the health. The reason of our pleasure appears to be that art imitates things; things which themselves would please us to possess, to do or to witness, though the reality might often be immoral or attended with inconvenience and, in one way or another, cost too much. Art then will have just the qualities of the things it imitates, and must be regulated by the legislator just as those things themselves; for though it might seem that the copy would be at least weaker than the original, it is as a matter of fact, owing either

[25] In the quite different classification of the *Philebus* (66) the beautiful, not here regarded as imitative (cf. 51*b*), is given the second place in the classification of goods along with the symmetrical and perfect, below measure and harmony, but above mind, wisdom, science, art, true opinion and painless pleasure.

to the venal exaggeration of the artist, or to some psychological connection of make-believe with emotion," more exciting. The natural consequence would be that imitation of what is good should be allowed, and of what is bad forbidden; but no one except the philosopher is able to recognise the truly good and bad, and he will teach rather by example, by the reality of virtue, unless to the very young, than by colours or feigning words which touch but its appearance.[27] Even the imitation of indifferent things, if such there be, must be forbidden, for imitating many things, like dilatory and inconstant conduct, weakens character.

Now two main strands are interwoven in this theory, the hedonistic-moral and the mimetic, which are not inseparable.[28] For even if we thought the method of art something quite different from mere copying, we might still hold that, as art, it aimed merely at pleasure, and therefore could not be called good or bad, but only pleasant, except as it promoted good or bad conduct. And conversely we might hold art to be some sort of imitation, but believe, with Aristotle,[29] that this was either a means to knowledge or a valuable activity in itself. But I think Plato takes neither of these last views; he does not even seem to hold that imitation is *pleasing* in itself, but only when it imitates pleasant things.[30] It will be convenient therefore to postpone our discussion of artistic realism to the criticism of what we have called anti-æsthetic, of the doctrine, namely, that art only has its value in the pleasure or the good-

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[26] *Rep.*,. 604, 606. Schopenhauer (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii. § 51) gives a truer reason for this 'aganactetic' element in art.

[27] Cf. Epicurus' opinion that the wise man would 'live poems' rather than write them. Diog. Laert., x. 121.

[28] But cf. Bosanquet, *History of Æsthetic*, chs. iii., iv.

[29] *Poetics*, 1448*b*.

[30] *Rep.*, 599*a*.

ness it promotes. For that art simply pleases, and that it simply instructs, are two complementary untruths, inconsistent, but not seldom held together.

§ 10. The saying of Dryden has been quoted with approval[31] that the end of poetry is to please; and compared with the didactics of a Bossu this seemed a truth. For at least poetry and art always do please, in the loose sense of that term which has given plausibility to hedonism; to the man whom they do not please they are not beautiful. An exhortation to hear poetry or music whether it pleases us or no is even more obviously a false abstraction than Aristotle's saying that we should choose virtue if it gave us no pleasure.[32] We can form no conception of a virtuous act without its proper satisfaction, and what a man hears without pleasure is to him noise. We may listen to the musician's noise, as we do to that of a foreign language, in the hope of one day catching its delightful meaning, but till it please us we are not listening to music.

Yet it does not follow that art, any more than morality, is just a way of indiscriminately seeking pleasure. If it were so, since many pleasures are admittedly bad, either in themselves, like the pleasures of malice, or in their results, like the pleasures of intoxication, Plato's attack would be justifiable. He would be both a bad and a foolish man who should refuse to submit his culinary pleasures to a medical censorship. If all we can say about art in itself is, as Plato supposed, that it tickles the senses, then we are driven like him to find some incidental utility in it to account for the high value we place upon it as compared with even keener titillations.

§ 11. The conclusive arguments against setting up ab-

[31] *Theory of Beauty*, p. 43.
[32] *Eth. Nic.*, 1174*a*, 12.

stract pleasure as the end of conduct are well known.[33] With the necessary modifications they are applicable to hedonistic theories of beauty. It will be enough for us to say here with Aristotle that art aims not at pleasure, but at its proper pleasure;[34] or more accurately that the creation and perception of beauty are activities recognised as good and desirable in themselves for mankind, as much as virtue or knowledge; and therefore as much as these bringing with them their appropriate satisfaction, and as little in need of extraneous justification.[35] If art were in itself nothing but a means to pleasure we should be content to exchange it for a greater quantity of other means to the same end; and it would be purely selfish to further what pleases a few rather than what pleases many; so that a certain quantity of tobacco or conjuring would be equal to Shakespeare. To deny this on the ground that we want the peculiar kind of pleasure called art is to concede the point. For if we prefer æsthetic pleasure to a greater or equal quantity of gustatory enjoyment it is not pleasure generically that attracts us but the differentia.[36]

§ 12. Similarly if art were only valued because it promoted morality we should only employ it when assured that it was cheaper and more efficient than sermons; while to prefer *Don Quixote* to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would be mere voluptuousness. Both these suppositions are palpably trivial. Beauty is not to be thus bought or sold for a price.

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[33] They are accessible in numberless treatises from Plato's own *Philebus* (especially 55) to Mr. F. H. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, iii., Mr. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, ch. iii., or Dr. Rashdall's *The Theory of Good and Evil*, ch. ii.

[34] *Poetics*, 1453*b*, 11. [35] Croce, *Estetica*, p. 87.

[36] If it be denied, with truth as I think, that different pleasures can ever be summed or compared quantitatively, my contention would be true *a fortiori*, but it seemed unnecessary to raise this question. For the opposing arguments, cf. Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, II, i, and Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 229–30.

Though, as has been said, the moralistic theory, occasionally in overt company of its hedonistic accomplice or patron, was orthodox until the revival of philosophy in the eighteenth century, it was, like many undisputed orthodoxies, undefended by arguments. To find these we must turn to the quite modern and unsystematic writings of Ruskin and Tolstoy.

§ 13. Tolstoy's incoherence makes his theory [37] difficult to criticise, but its popularity gives it a certain importance, and its derivation, through many degrees, from Plato renders it instructive. Quite neglecting the æsthetic qualities of nature he explicitly condemns the conception of beauty as something noxiously hedonistic; [38] art is the deliberate communication of feelings,[39] a thing in itself indifferent, but permissible and indeed praiseworthy when those feelings are compatible with the good and end of life as conceived at the time.[40] The resemblance to Plato here in results, as well as in moral enthusiasm, though not in antecedent thought or in the immensity of philosophic background which makes Plato's casual mistakes so invaluable, is sufficiently striking; and it is further increased by the demand for simplicity, a demand which Tolstoy, entangled in the *State of Nature* fallacy, rationalises on the ground that all art should be intelligible to the simplest peasant.[41] He does not bring these two tests into relation by telling us if his simple peasants are really contented with an art that communicates religious feelings, while it excludes dogma, the love of the sexes or of one's own family or property, pride and patriotism.[42] Again, though he has turned a blind eye to natural beauty he cannot quite blink the fact of formal or decorative art,

[37] English translation, *What is Art?*
[38] *Theory of Beauty*, pp. 52, 59.
[39] *Ibid.* p. 50.
[40] *Ibid.* p. 54, 156.
[41] *Ibid.* p. 145.
[42] *Ibid.* ch. xix.

and finds it very troublesome for his theory. A good arabesque is said to communicate "the feeling of admiration for a beautiful shape,"[43] but he should properly add "or of disgust for an ugly one," since in beauty he finds nothing akin to art but only sensual pleasure. On the antithesis of form and matter he is perhaps not more confused than better thinkers. It would, however, be trivial to dwell on these and similar confusions. We are only concerned to draw from partial theories what stuff we can for sounder doctrine. And though he has confused communication with expression, Tolstoy is right in his main teaching—that all the elaborate 'art-forms' of tradition or caprice, unless they have behind them some vital passion forcing itself into just this and no other mould, are nothing but the pedantic luxury which is a weariness of the flesh. Ruskin[44] holds that fine art has only three functions: enforcing the religious sentiments of men, perfecting their ethical state and doing them material service; and though he wisely modifies, and even contradicts this,[45] it is on the whole his main view.

Of all these anti-æsthetics, which reduce the value of that pleasant thing called beauty to the moral lesson imparted by an artist, we must barely say that they do not describe our æsthetic experience. That the paintings of Velasquez do more for honesty or temperance than those of Carlo Dolci or Benjamin West is simply a pious dogma for which, after sympathetic effort, I can see no argument.

§ 14. It is not impossible, but it is rare, to find a

[43] *Theory of Beauty*, pp. 49, 171.

[44] *Oxford Lectures.*

[45] *Oxford Lectures* and *Two Paths*, § 66. Ruskin defends his inconsistency on this and other points admirably and with an almost Hegelian turn, consistently inconsistent with his views of German philosophy. *Cambridge Inaugural*, § 13; *Modern Painters*, viii. 1, § 14.

quite satisfactory work of art to which we can assign its edification. Milton does not really justify God's ways to men, but we perhaps care more for him than those who thought he did. Dr. Johnson saw that Shakespeare "seems to write without any moral purpose" and "is not always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked."[46] As Scott said: "The professed moral of a piece is like the mendicant who cripples after some splendid and gay procession, and in vain solicits the attention of those who have been gazing on it." Plato has only the logic of his premises when he banishes painters and poets. If it be said that this is very unimaginative and pedantic criticism; that though Velasquez has no moral we are the better for Las Meniñas, as Lamb perpended whether he might be for the Restoration drama;[47] and that Comus improves us though not by its preaching; we must reply that, in a sense, this may be so, but most certainly not in the sense which Tolstoy, Ruskin, and, with a difference, Plato, in the true, usual and literal meaning of their words intend. For after all the word which Lamb preferred to describe his amelioration by Congreve was 'gayer'; and his discrimination was as nice here as ever, for it is a most insidious anti-æsthetic formula that comedy by lashing vice excuses laughter. Many men have lashed vice without drawing a smile, and out of very good virtues has come good comedy.[48]

If the improvement which justifies art is æsthetic improvement, if the lesson of Velasquez is to see unsus-

[46] *Preface to Shakespeare.*

[47] *Essays of Elia,* "On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century."

[48] Cf. Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie,* 29: "The true use of Comedy is in laughter itself, in the practice of our power to discern the ridiculous." Similarly, it is not the worst poetry nor that we like least which we can best parody. Cf. Keats' and Swinburne's parodies of their own.

pected beauties, we are in a circle; for seeing beauty in general wants as much moral justification as seeing it in Velasquez. If we are better men for being susceptible to the beauty of light and the charm of mere seeing, we were better already in contemplating the picture. Every æsthetic act is its own reward, instantaneously perfect; for though it may be said only to find its complete end in the formed habit, this on the other hand, apart from its particular exercises, is a mere potentiality.

§ 15. But the moral effect of art has been maintained in a more disputable form which founds itself with varying directness on the famous sayings of Aristotle [49] that tragedy, by exciting pity and fear, effects its purgation of such emotions, and that certain kinds of music do the same for "enthusiasm." Fortunately we are not involved in the philological discussion of this much-debated passage. We may accept Professor Bywater's conclusion that Aristotle thought that tragedy benefits us by giving a harmless vent to feelings with which we shall then be less heavily weighted in our active life.[50] We need only remark that in that case Aristotle seems to have been careless. Whatever may be thought of "enthusiasm" and fear, pity is not, except in a very special sense, a faculty of which the statesman should wish to purge us. Nor are pity and fear deposits of which the more we spend the less we have, but rather, as Plato [51] knew, faculties which are strengthened by exercise; we should not fortify a man against a night-watch with a dismal treatise, nor steel him against pity with a tale of tears. Nor does Aristotle seem prepared to advise us, as he

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[49] *Poetics*, 1449*b*, 27; *Politics*, 1341*b*, 32.

[50] *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, p. 161. By taking the genitive objectively he presents the purgation as a complete removal or at least a merely quantitative reduction, not the sifting out of any undesirable element.

[51] *Rep.*, 411, 606.

consistently might, to sow in the harmless field of the theatre a yet wilder kind of oats.

§ 16. What really concerns us is that almost every writer on tragedy from the revival of Aristotelian learning to our own day has adopted something which he took to be the doctrine of the *Poetics*. In the most general terms they may be said to have agreed that after the excitement of the emotions by a tragedy these are left in a better condition than they were before.[52] And it has naturally been suggested that, if this is so, something analogous may be expected from other arts for the feelings which they exercise. Thus have the determined moralists, who are three-fourths of the world, found a way to justify art without demanding a moral. How far this consensus is of genuine experience and how far of reverence for the authority may be impossible to determine. There are strong arguments on the other side; Mr. Bradley[53] says: "If poetic value lies in the mitigation of the passions, the Odes of Sappho will win but little praise." But I am not sure that I agree, and if some more general word were put for 'mitigation' so as to cover the vague notions of appeasement, correction, and refining attributed, however loosely, to Aristotle, I think that I should not. Passion thus realised, thus expressed and irradiated by the spirit is a more human thing than when it was brutally indulged or brutally stifled, though possibly a still humaner poem might be, or has been, written to irradiate a different motive.

§ 17. No doubt a cathartic effect is more obvious in tragedy than elsewhere; in Greek tragedy, as Shelley

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[52] Bywater (*op. cit.*, Appendix) and Butcher (*Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, ch. vi.), give many of these interpretations and resemblances. To which may be added Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, iv. §§ 6, 7; Shelley, *Defence of Poetry;* Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* §§ 7, 16, 21, pp. 55, 116, 150.

[53] *Oxford Lectures, Poetry for Poetry's Sake.* A. C. Bradley.

says: [54] "Error is divested of its wilfulness; men can no longer cherish it as the creation of their choice. In a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect." R. L. Nettleship's criticism upon *Antony and Cleopatra*,[55] that "as soon as there is any beauty, or tragedy, or humour in the thing it ceases to be mere 'vice,'" might be transferred to Sappho, for the contemplative objectification explicit in tragedy is implied also in lyric. "Archilochus," says Nietzsche,[56] "as the man burnt up with passions of love and hate, is only a vision of the genius who is now no longer Archilochus but the genius of the world, who symbolically expresses his eternal pain in that similitude of the human Archilochus."

Schopenhauer has extended most widely over the field of art this theory of enfranchisement from the passions.[57] "The head of the God of the Muses with eyes fixed on the far distance stands so freely on his shoulders that it seems wholly delivered from the body and no more subject to its cares." But it is Hegel[58] who has most profoundly illuminated it. After pointing out certain difficulties in the view that art aims at simply arousing the greatest amount of emotion of any kind, he considers the theory that in some way it mitigates the passions,—*emollit mores*,—and asks how it could do this. The brutality of passion consists in its selfishness and engrossingness, in the identification of the self with a narrowly limited interest. But art shows to man's mind that which he would otherwise unconsciously be; so that even if, as some think, it flatters passion, it yet makes

[54] *Defence of Poetry.*
[55] *Philosophical Remains*, i., "Miscellaneous Papers," No. 29.
[56] *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, § 5, p. 42.
[57] *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii. *ad init.* and *passim.*
[58] *Æsthetic*, Einleitung, III. ii. in Bosanquet's translation.

him aware of himself, and by putting him into a spiritual instead of a brutal relation with his feelings it delivers him from their tyranny. Lusts become emotions. Tears even in a certain sense express and so mitigate grief; and in higher degrees professional mourners, solemn music and elegies free us from our "blind sunkenness" in despair. No theory, Hegel goes on, more definitely moral than this can be accepted. If art becomes one among other means of recommending good conduct, it is degraded, and true morality is not thereby furthered. But if it is knowledge of humanity, because knowledge of self and the possibilities of self, then, however alarming or humiliating, it can never be alien from our deepest need. With Ajax we must pray for light if it be but to die in; as indeed the Greeks, perhaps, could not see themselves and live:

> Ζεῦ, πάτερ, ἀλλὰ σὺ ῥῦσαι ὑπ' ἠέρος υἷας Ἀχαιῶν,
> Ποίησον δ' αἴθρην, δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι·
> Ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον, ἐπεὶ νύ τοι εὔαδεν οὕτως.[59]

§ 18. In this sense it may be said art liberates man from his passions in giving him something else to do with them than to gratify them,—to make them the object of his contemplation. But this distraction is not the differentia[60] of æsthetic experience nor its essence. All spiritual activity is true liberation; and that from which it liberates us is passivity or passion, from which we need to be free just because it is an inchoate and impeded activity. Philosophy, Religion, Action, Science, each in its own way removes the barriers against which some activity seemed to break itself, and all in their

[59] *Il.*, xvii. 646. See note at end of chapter.

[60] I am much indebted on this point to Professor J. A. Smith's lectures on *Some Errors in Aristotle's Theory of Poetry*. The view here adopted seems to be an improved and explicated form of that by which Hegel just succeeds in struggling free of the moralising tradition; *loc. cit.* and cf. *Æsthetik*, vol. iii. p. 135.

own way may be said to free us from the passions. But the essential thing about each is not that it distracts us from the others, but that it liberates us by its proper activity from its proper passivity or passion. The student of philosophy is perhaps not likely to be extremely violent or covetous. But this is not why we value philosophy, and the popular implication of the epithet 'philosophic' is refuted by conspicuous exceptions. The peculiar passion from which it frees us is curiosity, and that is 'φιλοσοφία' impeded by the passivity of ignorance. The artistic experience frees us from the desire for expression, which just is the artistic activity or 'φιλοκαλία' beating against the bars of ugliness and incoherence. Not only from pity and fear but from triumph and envy and the burden of every other emotion does art in a sense free us; yet from the burden of none of them simply but only as craving for expression, yet unexpressed and therefore ugly.

To be tormented with a passion for beauty, a sensitiveness to ugliness, is the condition of the æsthetic experience; to be blessed with the gratification of that passion is the realisation of the experience itself. And it is the preoccupation with this desire rather than its attainment,—except so far as appetite never fed is apt to be stifled,—which may distract the mind alike from good or evil conduct; as it is scientific curiosity and not science which keeps the astronomer from his bed. That either should have these good or bad effects is extrinsic to them, and of no interest to a theory of art or to philosophy, though properly to be considered by the moralist in approving an artistic or scientific act.

§ 19. Here we seem to have found an account of the relation of art to morality which we may accept. If it is far enough from the literal meaning of Aristotle, and in almost direct contradiction to that of Plato, it may yet

be the truth which they are endeavouring to divine. Its connection with Croce [61] is apparent, it is the rationalisation of the intuitive feeling of poets from Milton [62] to Shelley, and if the moralists will accept it our reconciliation is not far off.[63] But it must be pointed out how far it is from their original statement. It admits if it does not necessitate Shelley's warning to the artist against directly embodying his own moral ideas in his work. It holds that art aims essentially at neither pleasure nor edification, but that we are better, more human, less brutal beings, for that æsthetic exercise in which we learn what the world of man's spirit, apart from our particular desires and convenience, really is.

This is a conclusion analogous to the one already reached as to the effect of natural beauty on character; the higher argument that they are really one conclusion, that all beauty, natural or artistic, is really expressive and spiritual must be attempted later.

§ 20. At present we may content ourselves with the saying of Pater: [64] "To witness this spectacle (of life and nature) with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture." It is certainly what we mean by the æsthetic activity; and so far as a man's feelings are thus unselfishly adjusted he can hardly be unhappy or the cause of unhappiness, since in the language of St. John

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61 *Estetica*, pp. 24, 183.

62 *Samson Agonistes*, ad fin. Cf. Schiller, *Ueber ästhetische Erziehung*, Brief 22: "An art concerned with passion there is; but passionate art is a contradiction, for the inevitable result of artistic beauty is freedom from passions."

63 Those contemporary successors of the moralising school who adopt the formula "art for life" either make their point—*plus royalistes que le roi*—by defining life in terms of art, to the neglect of thought and conduct, or explain that art is a "constituent means" to life, by which contradiction in terms they only intend what no sane man ever doubted, that it is but one of the things which are ends.

64 *Appreciations: Wordsworth.* I suppose 'appropriate' means 'disinterested.'

of the Cross: [65] "the Spiritual man has greater joy and comfort in creatures if he detaches himself from them; and he can have no joy in them if he considers them as his own; . . . he rejoices in their truth . . . in their substantial worth." To those who dislike such authority or its application to our subject we may quote another, hardly to be suspected of narrow moralisation. "Under the charm of Dionysiac (or tragic) art the bond between man and man is knitted up; even alien nature, hostile or enslaved, celebrates once more the reconciliation with man, her long-lost child." [66]

What hindered Plato from any but the most intermittent glimpses of this truth, what more than any one thing cuts him off here from Hegel's explicitness and even from Aristotle's implication is his assumption that art imitates particular things. It is this Realistic Theory of art which we must now examine.

[65] i. 298, quoted by von Hügel, *Mystical Element in Religion*, i. 68.
[66] Nietzsche, *op. cit.* p. 24, § 1.

NOTE ADDED TO SECOND EDITION

It is perhaps a mere chance that a Chinese poet of the third century A.D. translated by Mr. Waley in the *Bulletin of Oriental Studies*, 1917, p. 49, paraphrased the doctrine of purgation:

"Tongues loosened and minds at one,
Hearts refreshed by discharge of emotion."

More relevant to Hegel is Euripides, *Tro.* 120:

Μοῦσα δὲ χ'αὕτη τοῖς δυστήνοις
ἄτας κελαδεῖν ἀχορέυτους

Cf. *Med.* 190, *et seq.*

I. A. Richards

The Poetic Experience[1]

The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

EXTRAORDINARY claims have often been made for poetry—Matthew Arnold's words quoted at the head of this essay are an example—claims which very many people are inclined to view with astonishment or with the smile which tolerance gives to the enthusiast. Indeed a more representative modern view would be that the future of poetry is *nil*. Peacock's conclusion in his *The Four Ages of Poetry* finds a more general acceptance. "A poet in our times is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community. He lives in the days that are past. . . . In whatever degree poetry is cultivated, it must necessarily be to the neglect of some branch of useful study: and it is a lamentable thing to see minds, capable of better things, running to seed in the specious indolence of these empty aimless mockeries of intellectual exertion.

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1 Reprinted, with permission, from *Science and Poetry*, by I. A. Richards. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1926.

Poetry was the mental rattle that awakened the attention of intellect in the infancy of civil society: but for the maturity of mind to make a serious business of the playthings of its childhood, is as absurd as for a grown man to rub his gums with coral, and cry to be charmed asleep by the jingle of silver bells." And with more regret many others—Keats was among them—have thought that the inevitable effect of the advance of science would be to destroy the possibility of poetry.

What is the truth in this matter? How is our estimate of poetry going to be affected by science? And how will poetry itself be influenced? The extreme importance which has in the past been assigned to poetry is a fact which must be accounted for whether we conclude that it was rightly assigned or not, and whether we consider that poetry will continue to be held in such esteem or not. It indicates that the case for poetry, whether right or wrong, is one which turns on momentous issues. We shall not have dealt adequately with it unless we have raised questions of great significance.

Very much toil has gone to the endeavour to explain the high place of poetry in human affairs, with, on the whole, few satisfactory or convincing results. This is not surprising. For in order to show how poetry is important it is first necessary to discover to some extent what it is. Until recently this preliminary task could only be very incompletely carried out; the psychology of instinct and emotion was too little advanced; and, moreover, the wild speculations natural in pre-scientific enquiry definitely stood in the way. Neither the professional psychologist, whose interest in poetry is frequently not intense, nor the man of letters, who as a rule has no adequate ideas of the mind as a whole, has been equipped for the investigation. Both a passionate knowledge of poetry and a capacity for dispassionate

psychological analysis are required if it is to be satisfactorily prosecuted.

It will be best to begin by asking 'What *kind of a thing*, in the widest sense, is poetry?' When we have answered this we shall be ready to ask 'How can we use and misuse it?' and 'What reasons are there for thinking it valuable?'

Let us take an experience, ten minutes of a person's life, and describe it in broad outline. It is now possible to indicate its general structure, to point out what is important in it, what trivial and accessory, which features depend upon which, how it has arisen, and how it is probably going to influence his future experience. There are, of course, wide gaps in this description, none the less it *is* at least possible to understand in general how the mind works in an experience, and what sort of stream of events the experience is.

A poem, let us say Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge* sonnet, is such an experience, it is the experience the right kind of reader has when he peruses the verses. And the first step to an understanding of the place and future of poetry in human affairs is to see what the general structure of such an experience is. Let us begin by reading it very slowly, preferably aloud, giving every syllable time to make its full effect upon us. And let us read it experimentally, repeating it, varying our tone of voice until we are satisfied that we have caught its rhythm as well as we are able, and—whether our reading is such as to please other people or not—we ourselves at least are certain how it should 'go.'

> Earth has not anything to show more fair:
> Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
> A sight so touching in its majesty:
> This City now doth like a garment wear
> The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,

Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
Open to the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at its own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

We may best make our analysis of the experience that arises through reading these lines from the surface inwards, to speak metaphorically. The surface is the impression of the printed words on the retina. This sets up an agitation which we must follow as it goes deeper and deeper.

The first things to occur (if they do not, the rest of the experience will be gravely inadequate) are the sound of the words 'in the mind's ear' and the feel of the words imaginarily spoken.[2] These together give the *full body,* as it were, to the words, and it is with the full bodies of words that the poet works, not with their printed signs. But many people lose nearly everything in poetry through these indispensable parts escaping them.

Next arise various pictures 'in the mind's eye'; not of words but of things for which the words stand; perhaps of ships, perhaps of hills; and together with them, it may be, other images of various sorts. Images of what it feels like to stand leaning on the parapet of Westminster Bridge. Perhaps that odd thing an image of 'silence.' But, unlike the image-bodies of the words themselves, those other images of things are not vitally important. Those who have them may very well think them indis-

[2] The view of the mind-body problem assumed here is defended and maintained with references to the contemporary authorities who hold it, in *The Meaning of Psychology* by C. K. Ogden, Chapter II. (London, Kegan, Paul; New York, Harpers; 1926.)

pensable, and *for them* they may be necessary; but other people may not require them at all. This is a point at which differences between individual minds are very marked.

Thence onwards the agitation which is the experience divides into a major and a minor branch, though the two streams have innumerable interconnections and influence one another intimately. Indeed it is only as an expositor's artifice that we may speak of them as two streams.

The minor branch we may call the intellectual stream; the other, which we may call the active, or emotional, stream, is made up of the play of our interests.

The intellectual stream is fairly easy to follow; it follows itself, so to speak; but it is the less important of the two. In poetry it matters only *as a means;* it directs and excites the active stream. It is made up of thoughts, which are not static little entities that bob up into consciousness and down again out of it, but fluent happenings, events, which reflect or point to the things the thoughts are of. Exactly how they do this is a matter which is still much disputed.

This pointing to or reflecting things is all that thoughts do. They appear to do much more; which is our chief illusion. The realm of thought is never a sovereign state. Our thoughts are the servants of our interests, and even when they seem to rebel it is usually our interests that are in disorder. Our thoughts are pointers and it is the other, the active, stream which deals with the things which thoughts reflect or point to.

Some people who read verse (they do not often read much of it) are so constituted that very little more happens than this intellectual stream of thoughts. It is perhaps superfluous to point out that they miss the real poem. To exaggerate this part of the experience, and

give it too much importance on its own account, is a notable current tendency, and for many people explains why they do not read poetry.

The active branch is what really matters; for from it all the energy of the whole agitation comes. The thinking which goes on is somewhat like the play of an ingenious and invaluable 'governor' run by, but controlling, the main machine. Every experience is essentially some interest or group of interests swinging back to rest.

To understand what an interest is we should picture the mind as a system of very delicately poised balances, a system which so long as we are in health is constantly growing. Every situation we come into disturbs some of these balances to some degree. The ways in which they swing back to a new equipoise are the impulses with which we respond to the situation. And the chief balances in the system are our chief interests.

Suppose that we carry a magnetic compass about in the neighbourhood of powerful magnets. The needle waggles as we move and comes to rest pointing in a new direction whenever we stand still in a new position. Suppose that instead of a single compass we carry an arrangement of many magnetic needles, large and small, swung so that they influence one another, some able only to swing horizontally, other vertically, others hung freely. As we move, the perturbations in this system will be very complicated. But for every position in which we place it there will be a final position of rest for all the needles into which they will in the end settle down, a general poise for the whole system. But even a slight displacement may set the whole assemblage of needles busily readjusting themselves.

One further complication. Suppose that while all the needles influence one another, some of them respond only to some of the outer magnets among which the system

is moving. The reader can easily draw a diagram if his imagination needs a visual support.

The mind is not unlike such a system if we imagine it to be incredibly complex. The needles are our interests, varying in their importance, that is in the degree to which any movement they make involves movement in the other needles. Each new disequilibrium, which a shift of position, a fresh situation, entails, corresponds to a need; and the wagglings which ensue as the system rearranges itself are our responses, the impulses through which we seek to meet the need. Often the new poise is not found until long after the original disturbance. Thus states of strain can arise which last for years.

The child comes into the world as a comparatively simple arrangement. Few things affect him comparatively speaking, and his responses also are few and simple, but he very quickly becomes more complicated. His recurrent needs for food and for various attentions are constantly setting all his needles swinging. Little by little separate needs become departmentalized as it were, sub-systems are formed; hunger causes one set of responses, the sight of his toys another, loud noises yet another, and so on. But the sub-systems never become quite independent. So he grows up, becoming susceptible to ever more numerous and more delicate influences.

He grows more discriminating in some respects, he is thrown out of equilibrium by slighter differences in his situation. In other respects he becomes more stable. From time to time, through growth, fresh interests develop; sex is the outstanding example. His needs increase, he becomes capable of being upset by quite new causes, he becomes responsive to quite new aspects of the situation.

This development takes a very indirect course. It would be still more erratic if society did not mould and

remould him at every stage, reorganising him incompletely two or three times over before he grows up. He reaches maturity in the form of a vast assemblage of major and minor interests, partly a chaos, partly a system, with some tracts of his personality fully developed and free to respond, others tangled and jammed in all kinds of accidental ways. It is this incredibly complex assemblage of interests to which the printed poem has to appeal. Sometimes the poem is itself the influence which disturbs us, sometimes it is merely the means by which an already existing disturbance can right itself. More usually perhaps it is both at once.

We must picture then the stream of the poetic experience as the swinging back into equilibrium of these disturbed interests. We are reading the poem in the first place only because we are in some way interested in doing so, only because some interest is attempting to regain its poise thereby. And whatever happens as we read happens only for a similar reason. We understand the words (the intellectual branch of the stream goes on its way successfully) only because an interest is reacting through that means, and all the rest of the experience is equally but more evidently our adaptation working itself out.

The rest of the experience is made up of emotions and attitudes. Emotions are what the reaction, with its reverberations in bodily changes, feels like. Attitudes are the impulses towards one kind of behaviour or another which are set ready by the response. They are, as it were, its outward going part.[3] Sometimes, as here in *Westminster Bridge*, they are very easily overlooked. But consider a simpler case—a fit of laughter which it is

[3] For a further discussion of attitudes see the author's *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Chapter XV (International Library of Psychology).

absolutely essential to conceal, in Church or during a solemn interview, for example. You contrive not to laugh; but there is no doubt about the activity of the impulses in their restricted form. The much more subtle and elaborate impulses which a poem excites are not different in principle. They do not show themselves as a rule, they do not come out into the open, largely because they are so complex. When they have adjusted themselves to one another and become organized into a coherent whole, the needs concerned may be satisfied. *In a fully developed man a state of readiness for action will take the place of action when the full appropriate situation for action is not present.* The essential peculiarity of poetry as of all the arts is that the full appropriate situation is *not* present. It is an *actor* we are seeing upon the stage, not Hamlet. So readiness for action takes the place of actual behaviour.

This is the main plan then of the experience. Signs on the retina, taken up by sets of needs (remember how many other impressions all day long remain entirely *unnoticed* because no interest responds to them); thence an elaborate agitation of impulses, one branch of which is *thoughts* of what the words mean, the other an emotional response leading to the development of *attitudes,* preparations, that is, for action which may or may not take place; the two branches being in intimate connection.

We must look now a little more closely at these connections. It may seem odd that we do not more definitely make the thoughts the rulers and causes of the rest of the response. To do just this has been in fact the grand error of traditional psychology. Man prefers to stress the features which distinguish him from monkey, and chief among these are his intellectual capacities. Important though they are, he has given them

a rank to which they are not entitled. Intellect is an adjunct to the interests, a means by which they adjust themselves more successfully. Man is not in any sense primarily an intelligence; he is a system of interests. Intelligence helps man but does not run him.

Partly through this natural mistake, and partly because intellectual operations are so much easier to study, the whole traditional analysis of the working of the mind has been turned upside down. It is largely as a remedy from the difficulties which this mistake involves that poetry may have so much importance in the future. But let us look again more closely at the poetic experience.

In the first place, why is it essential in reading poetry to give the words their full imagined sound and body? What is meant by saying that the poet works with this sound and body? The answer is that even before the words have been intellectually understood and the thoughts they occasion formed and followed, the movement and sound of the words is playing deeply and intimately upon the interests. How this happens is a matter which has yet to be successfully investigated, but that it happens no sensitive reader of poetry doubts. A good deal of poetry and even some great poetry exists (*e.g.*, some of Shakespeare's Songs and, in a different way, much of the best of Swinburne) in which the sense of the words can be *almost* entirely missed or neglected without loss. Never perhaps entirely without effort, however; though sometimes with advantage. But the plain fact that the relative importance of grasping the sense of the words may vary (compare Browning's *Before* with his *After*) is enough for our purpose here.

In nearly all poetry the sound and feel of the words, what is often called the *form* of the poem in opposition to its *content*, get to work first, and the sense in which the words are taken is subtly influenced by this fact.

Most words are ambiguous as regards their plain sense, especially in poetry. We can take them as we please in a variety of senses. The sense we are pleased to choose is the one which most suits the impulses already stirred through the form of the verse. The same thing can be noticed in conversation. Not the strict logical sense of what is said, but the tone of voice and the occasion are the primary factors by which we interpret. Science, it is worth noting, endeavours with increasing success to bar out these factors. We believe a scientist because he can substantiate his remarks, not because he is eloquent or forcible in his enunciation. In fact, we distrust him when he seems to be influencing us by his manner.

In its use of words poetry is just the reverse of science. Very definite thoughts do occur, but not because the words are so chosen as logically to bar out all possibilities but one. No. But because the manner, the tone of voice, the cadence and the rhythm play upon our interests and make *them* pick out from among an indefinite number of possibilities the precise particular thought which they need. This is why poetical descriptions often seem so much more accurate than prose descriptions. Language logically and scientifically used cannot describe a landscape or a face. To do so it would need a prodigious apparatus of names for shades and nuances, for precise particular qualities. These names do not exist, so other means have to be used. The poet, even when, like Ruskin or De Quincey, he writes in prose, makes the reader pick out the precise particular sense required from an indefinite number of possible senses which a word, phrase or sentence may carry. The means by which he does this are many and varied. Some of them have been mentioned above, but the way in which he uses them is the poet's own secret, something

which cannot be taught. He knows how to do it, but he does not himself know how it is done.

Misunderstanding and under-estimation of poetry is mainly due to over-estimation of the thought in it. We can see still more clearly that thought is not the prime factor if we consider for a moment not the experience of the reader but that of the poet. Why does the poet use these words and no others? Not because they stand for a series of thoughts which in themselves are what he is concerned to communicate. It is never what a poem *says* which matters, but what it *is*. The poet is not writing as a scientist. He uses these words because the interests which the situation calls into play combine to bring them, just in this form, into his consciousness *as a means of ordering, controlling and consolidating* the whole experience. The experience itself, the tide of impulses sweeping through the mind, is the source and the sanction of the words. They represent this experience itself, not any set of perceptions or reflections, though often to a reader who approaches the poem wrongly they will seem to be only a series of remarks about other things. But to a suitable reader the words—if they actually spring from experience and are not due to verbal habits, to the desire to be effective, to factitious excogitation, to imitation, to irrelevant contrivances, or to any other of the failings which prevent most people from writing poetry—the words will reproduce in his mind a similar play of interests putting him for the while into a similar situation and leading to the same response.

Why this should happen is still somewhat of a mystery. An extraordinarily intricate concourse of impulses brings the words together. Then in another mind the affair in part reverses itself, the words bring into being a similar concourse of impulses. The words which seem to be the effect of the experience in the first instance,

seem to become the cause of a similar experience in the second. A very odd thing to happen, not exactly paralleled outside communication. But this description is not quite accurate. The words, as we have seen, are not simply the effect in one case, nor the cause in the other. In both cases they are the part of the experience which binds it together, which gives it a definite structure and keeps it from being a mere welter of disconnected impulses. They are *the key*, to borrow a useful metaphor from McDougall, for this particular combination of impulses. So regarded, it is less strange that what the poet wrote should reproduce his experience in the mind of the reader.

I. A. Richards

Poetry and Beliefs[1]

THE business of the poet, as we have seen, is to give order and coherence, and so freedom, to a body of experience. To do so through words which act as its skeleton, as a structure by which the impulses which make up the experience are adjusted to one another and act together. The means by which words do this are many and varied. To work them out is a problem for psychology. A beginning has been indicated above, but only a beginning. What little can be done shows already that most critical dogmas of the past are either false or nonsense. A little knowledge is not here a danger, but clears the air in a remarkable way.

Roughly and inadequately, even in the light of our present knowledge, we can say that words work in the poem in two main fashions. As sensory stimuli and as (in the *widest* sense) symbols. We must refrain from considering the sensory side of the poem, remarking only that it is *not* in the least independent of the other side, and that it has for definite reasons prior importance in most poetry. We must confine ourselves to the other function of words in the poem, or rather, omitting much that is of secondary relevance, to one form of that function, let me call it *pseudo-statement.*

It will be admitted—by those who distinguish between scientific statement, where truth is ultimately a matter of verification as this is understood in the labora-

[1] From *Science and Poetry.* See footnote, p. 131.

tory, and emotive utterance, where "truth" is primarily acceptability *by* some attitude, and more remotely is the acceptability *of* this attitude itself—that it is *not* the poet's business to make true statements. Yet poetry has constantly the air of making statements, and important ones; which is one reason why some mathematicians cannot read it. They find the alleged statements to be *false*. It will be agreed that their approach to poetry and their expectations from it are mistaken. But what exactly is the other, the right, the poetic, approach and how does it differ from the mathematical?

The poetic approach evidently limits the framework of possible consequences into which the pseudo-statement is taken. For the scientific approach this framework is unlimited. Any and every consequence is relevant. If any of the consequences of a statement conflicts with acknowledged fact then so much the worse for the statement. Not so with the pseudo-statement when poetically approached. The problem is—just how does the limitation work? The usual account is in terms of a supposed universe of discourse, a world of make-believe, of imagination, of recognised fictions common to the poet and his readers. A pseudo-statement which fits into this system of assumptions would be regarded as "poetically true"; one which does not, as "poetically false." This attempt to treat "poetic truth" on the model of general "coherence theories" is very natural for certain schools of logicians; but is inadequate, on the wrong lines from the outset. To mention two objections out of many; there is no means of discovering what the "universe of discourse" is on any occasion, and the kind of coherence which must hold within it, supposing it to be discoverable, is not an affair of logical relations. Attempt to define the system of propositions into which

O Rose, thou art sick!

must fit, and the logical relations which must hold between them if it is to be "poetically true"; the absurdity of the theory becomes evident.

We must look further. In the poetic approach the relevant consequences are not logical or to be arrived at by a partial relaxation of logic. Except occasionally and by accident logic does not enter at all. They are the consequences which arise through our emotional organisation. The acceptance which a pseudo-statement receives is entirely governed by its effects upon our feelings and attitudes. Logic only comes in, if at all, in subordination, as a servant to our emotional response. It is an unruly servant, however, as poets and readers are constantly discovering. A pseudo-statement is "true" if it suits and serves some attitude or links together attitudes which on other grounds are desirable. This kind of truth is so opposed to scientific truth that it is a pity to use so similar a word, but at present it is difficult to avoid the malpractice.[2]

This brief analysis may be sufficient to indicate the fundamental disparity and opposition between pseudo-statements as they occur in poetry and statements as they occur in science. A pseudo-statement is a form of words which is justified entirely by its effect in releasing or organising our impulses and attitudes (due regard being had for the better or worse organisations of these *inter se*); a statement, on the other hand, is justified by its truth, *i.e.* its correspondence, in a highly technical sense, with the fact to which it points.

Statements true and false alike do of course constantly touch off attitudes and action. Our daily practical existence is largely guided by them. On the whole true

[2] For an account of the various senses of truth and of the ways in which they may be distinguished in discussion cf. *The Meaning of Meaning*, by C. K. Ogden and the author, Chapters VII and X.

statements are of more service to us than false ones. None the less we do not and, at present, cannot order our emotions and attitudes by true statements alone. Nor is there any probability that we ever shall contrive to do so. This is one of the great new dangers to which civilisation is exposed. Countless pseudo-statements—about God, about the universe, about human nature, the relations of mind to mind, about the soul, its rank and destiny—pseudo-statements which are pivotal points in the organisation of the mind, vital to its well-being, have suddenly become, for sincere, honest and informal minds, impossible to believe. For centuries they have been believed; now they are gone, irrecoverably; and the knowledge which has killed them is not of a kind upon which an equally fine organisation of the mind can be based.

This is the contemporary situation. The remedy, since there is no prospect of our gaining adequate knowledge, and since indeed it is fairly clear that genuine knowledge cannot serve us here and can only increase our practical control of Nature, is to cut our pseudo-statements free from belief, and yet retain them, in this released state, as the main instruments by which we order our attitudes to one another and to the world. Not so desperate a remedy as may appear, for poetry conclusively shows that even the most important among our attitudes can be aroused and maintained without any belief entering in at all. Those of Tragedy, for example. We need no beliefs, and indeed we must have none, if we are to read *King Lear*. Pseudo-statements to which we attach no belief and statements proper such as science provides cannot conflict. It is only when we introduce illicit beliefs into poetry that danger arises. To do so is from this point of view a profanation of poetry.

Yet an important branch of criticism which has attracted the best talents from prehistoric times until today consists of the endeavour to persuade men that the functions of science and poetry are identical, or that the one is a 'higher form' of the other, or that they conflict and we must choose between them.

The root of this persistent endeavour has still to be mentioned; it is the same as that from which the Magical View of the world arose. If we give to a pseudo-statement the kind of unqualified acceptance which belongs by right only to certified scientific statements, if we can contrive to do this, the impulses and attitudes with which we respond to it gain a notable stability and vigour. Briefly, if we can contrive to believe poetry, then the world *seems,* while we do so, to be transfigured. It used to be comparatively easy to do this, and the habit has become well established. With the extension of science and the neutralisation of nature it has become difficult as well as dangerous. Yet it is still alluring; it has many analogies with drug-taking. Hence the endeavours of the critics referred to. Various subterfuges have been devised along the lines of regarding Poetic Truth as figurative, symbolic; or as more immediate, as a truth of Intuition, not of reason; or as a higher form of the same truth as reason yields. Such attempts to use poetry as a denial or as a corrective of science are very common. One point can be made against them all: they are never worked out in detail. There is no equivalent to Mill's *Logic* expounding any such view. The language in which they are framed is usually a blend of obsolete psychology and emotive exclamations.

The long-established and much-encouraged habit of giving to emotive utterances—whether pseudo-statements simple, or looser and larger wholes taken as saying

something figuratively—the kind of assent which we give to established facts, has for most people debilitated a wide range of their responses. A few scientists, caught young and brought up in the laboratory, are free from it; but then, as a rule, they pay no *serious* attention to poetry. For most men the recognition of the neutrality of nature brings about—through this habit—a divorce from poetry. They are so used to having their responses propped up by beliefs, however vague, that when these shadowy supports are removed they are no longer able to respond. Their attitudes to so many things have been forced in the past, over-encouraged. And when the world-picture ceases to assist there is a collapse. Over whole tracts of natural emotional response we are to-day like a bed of dahlias whose sticks have been removed. And this effect of the neutralisation of nature is only in its beginnings. Consider the probable effects upon love-poetry in the near future of the kind of enquiry into basic human constitution exemplified by psycho-analysis.

A sense of desolation, of uncertainty, of futility, of the groundlessness of aspirations, of the vanity of endeavour, and a thirst for a life-giving water which seems suddenly to have failed, are the signs in consciousness of this necessary reorganisation of our lives.[3] Our attitudes and impulses are being compelled to become self-supporting; they are being driven back upon their

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[3] To those familiar with Mr. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, my indebtedness to it at this point will be evident. He seems to me by this poem, to have performed two considerable services for this generation. He has given a perfect emotive description of a state of mind which is probably inevitable for a while to all meditative people. Secondly, by effecting a complete severance between his poetry and *all* beliefs, and this without any weakening of the poetry, he has realised what might otherwise have remained largely a speculative possibility, and has shown the way to the only solution of these difficulties. "In the destructive element immerse. That is the way."

biological justification, made once again sufficient to themselves. And the only impulses which seem strong enough to continue unflagging are commonly so crude that, to more finely developed individuals, they hardly seem worth having. Such people cannot live by warmth, food, fighting, drink, and sex alone. Those who are least affected by the change are those who are emotionally least removed from the animals. As we shall see at the close of this essay, even a considerable poet may attempt to find relief by a reversion to primitive mentality.

It is important to diagnose the disease correctly and to put the blame in the right quarter. Usually it is some alleged 'materialism' of science which is denounced. This mistake is due partly to clumsy thinking, but chiefly to relics of the Magical View. For even if the Universe were "spiritual" all through (whatever that assertion might mean; all such assertions are probably nonsense), that would not make it any more accordant to human attitudes. It is not what the universe is made of but how it works, the law it follows, which makes knowledge of it incapable of spurring on our emotional responses, and further the nature of knowledge itself makes it inadequate. The contact with things which we therein establish is too sketchy and indirect to help us. We are beginning to know too much about the bond which unites the mind to its object in knowledge for that old dream of a perfect knowledge which would guarantee perfect life to retain its sanction. What was thought to be pure knowledge, we see now to have been shot through with hope and desire, with fear and wonder, and these intrusive elements indeed gave it all its power to support our lives. In knowledge, in the 'How?' of events, we can find hints by which to take advantage of circumstances in our favour and

avoid mischances. But we cannot get from it a *raison d'être* or a justification of more than a relatively lowly kind of life.

The justification, or the reverse, of any attitude lies, not in the object, but in itself, in its serviceableness to the whole personality. Upon its place in the whole system of attitudes, which is the personality, all its worth depends. This is true equally for the subtle, finely compounded attitudes of the civilized individual as for the simpler attitudes of the child.

In brief, experience is its own justification; and this fact must be faced, although sometimes—by a lover, for example—it may be very difficult to accept. Once it is faced, it is apparent that all the attitudes to other human beings and to the world in all its aspects, which have been serviceable to humanity, remain as they were, as valuable as ever. Hesitation felt in admitting this is a measure of the strength of the evil habit we have described. But many of these attitudes, valuable as ever, are now that they are being set free, more difficult to maintain, because we still hunger after a basis in belief.

Laurence Buermeyer

Art and the Ivory Tower[1]

IN THE minds of many the terms "art" and "the ivory tower" mean the same thing. Not everyone, it is true, would use words so figurative or so high-flown as "the ivory tower" to describe what he means by art, but there are many equivalent expressions for the abstractness, the remoteness, conceived to be characteristic of it. What is near at hand, a part of our ordinary concerns, is not thought to be art: to encounter art we must go to the museum, the opera-house, the "classical" work of literature. When we do meet it we are a little uncomfortable and also a little proud, for we are improving our minds, cultivating our sensibilities. Incidentally, we are challenging an investigation of our sincerity, and courting ridicule if the investigation goes against us. We are attempting to be better than our fellows, and if we fail the result is ignominy. In any case, we are setting ourselves apart, for better or for worse.

Along with this view goes usually a readiness to deplore the indifference to art, on the part of the public, which is said to be characteristic of our time as it was not of the Periclean Age or of the Thirteenth Century in Western Europe. The ugliness of a great part

[1] First printed in the Journal of the Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pa., May, 1925. Here reprinted from *Art and Education* by John Dewey and others, Merion, Pa., The Barnes Foundation Press, 1929.

of our material surroundings, the present low estate of the artist, and the general sordidness of much of our life, need not be disputed. But it is a question whether responsibility for this lamentable state of affairs is to be laid wholly at the door of those who are deaf to the gospel of art as that is ordinarily preached. So long as art is considered to be, by its nature, removed from the world in which we live and the things which naturally interest us there, the "swinish multitude" is perhaps not too severely to be castigated if it prefers the sty to the walled garden.

There is, however, a view of art which does not look to the ivory tower or the walled garden for its ideal. To distinguish this view from that usually held, we may begin with a point apparently trivial. In popular speech, the terms "artist" and "painter" are used interchangeably. The same is true of "sculptor," "composer," or "poet," and "artist": in each case the artist is regarded as someone who can do something that we ordinary mortals cannot. Expression in ordinary prose, however, is not considered an art, since all of us are capable of that. Art and a specialized skill thus become one and the same thing. Whatever else the artist is or is not, he is in a class apart from his fellows, and the connoisseur or the æsthete in a measure shares his distinction. This, roughly, is the popular equivalent of the ivory-tower view.

In contrast, an opinion has gained ground in recent years that art is primarily not a kind of technique or skill, like the ability to play chess, but that it is identical with all individual perception of the world and the things about us. Those familiar with recent discussion of æsthetics will at once recognize this as the view of Benedetto Croce. For Croce, the most immediate clue to the meaning of art is to be found, not in the things

that most of us cannot do, such as the composition of symphonies or the carving of statues, but in what, more or less, everyone can do. We can all talk, he says; therefore, if we would know what the artist does, we need only consider what we do when we use words to make our ideas or impressions communicable. All expression is art: we express ourselves whenever we look at the world, listen to the sounds there, and give to our fellowmen an intimation of what we have seen and heard. Really, the heart of expression is to be found in the immediate experience of apprehending. Words, like chisel or brush, serve merely as a means of communication.

Croce's view, which has gained a considerable vogue, suffers as much from excessive catholicity (at least in the hands of its interpreters) as does the traditional view from excessive exclusiveness. If we are all artists, the degrees of artistry become relatively unimportant, and attempted education in art is an impertinence. Complacency is no less fatal to growth than blind idolatry; however, the Crocean view does bring us closer to realities than the opposed opinion that art is inseparable from craftsmanship, and until it is understood a true æsthetics can scarcely be begun.

We ordinarily suppose, when looking at an object, that we see all of it that is there to be seen. We think of our mind as like a camera, faithfully reproducing whatever is before it. If we are unable to describe what we see, or paint a picture of it, that is merely because of our deficient mastery of words or paintbrush. The artist is thus the man who can reproduce his experiences, while we too have the experiences in spite of the fact that we cannot coin them into works of art. A very rudimentary knowledge of psychology suffices to destroy this error. What we ordinarily see in any

object is a mere blur of qualities, from which only such traits as are practically important stand out. We may notice, in looking at a tree, whether it bears fruit, or whether it casts enough shade to make a cool resting-place; we may see that it is a hard-wood tree, and therefore commercially valuable, or that it is infested with parasites, and so in need of spraying. But these are only a fraction of its qualities, and the rest of them, the texture of its bark, the set of its branches, the precise shape and color of its leaves, the symmetry of its total form, are likely to be disregarded. So with all things. We notice a house far away, and if we are in need of shelter we estimate the distance to it and the chances of our gaining admittance. The arrangement of doors and windows, on the other hand, the harmony between color of stone and color of roof, the number of chimneys, and so on, may be entirely disregarded. So too of the signs by which we judge of its distance: its apparent size, its relation to intervening objects, the clarity of its outline. Our perceptions, in brief, are very vague indeed, and it is because of this vagueness, and not of any mere lack of technique, that we cannot describe or reproduce what we see.

Of course, this is not true only of things literally *seen*. The persons about us are equally hazy. We usually want to know only what we need fear or what we may hope from them, and so we detect only the signs of friendly or hostile intent, of trustworthiness or dishonesty. The result is that we can tell little about them. We can indicate how they entertain or bore us, whether they are kindly or malicious in disposition, but how their lives feel to them, how the world appears in their eyes, is something of which we can say little. As our understanding of a man grows, the sense of our ignorance of him grows also, and we become aware that we shall

never fully grasp the springs of his action, the hidden sources of his thoughts, his hopes and his fears.

The artist's problem is thus revealed. It is not, primarily, to put upon canvas or paper a vision which may be had merely by turning the eye in a particular direction. After the gaze has been fixed, and before the pen or paintbrush is used, comes the most significant part of the artist's work. "The person to be painted stands before the artist like a world to discover." The seeing, the interpretation—it is this that exacts the labor and, when done, attests the triumph. He who can do it is the artist because he has something to say; he who cannot, whatever the skill with which he can repeat what others have said, is not an artist but an artisan, a tradesman; and since his pictures or his books, considered merely as material objects, are less useful than food or shelter, he stands in rank with the purveyor of cosmetics, and below the mason or the husbandman.

If to see and to interpret are art, then, it is true, we are all artists. But if, priding ourselves on the distinction, we forget that seeing and interpreting are the most arduous of human undertakings, we cannot be too quickly reminded of the debt we owe to those who have preëminently succeeded in the task, and who are artists in the distinctive sense. For most of us, and for all of us most of the time, seeing is a mechanical registration of pitiably meagre impressions, and "interpretation" is a hasty consignment to pigeon-holes made for us by others long ago. "Man lives not by bread alone, but chiefly by catchwords"—if we doubt this we need only ask ourselves how often we really judge an individual case on its merits, without recourse to some table of virtues and crimes, some set catalogue of things to be admired and things to be reprobated. Our world is

ordinarily one of abstractions, of "shadow-shapes that come and go"; it is bloodless and lifeless.

The proof of this is our attitude toward the new, toward anything that will not fit easily into one of the pigeon-holes of our mind. In interpreting the familiar we are simply living on accumulated intellectual capital, chiefly that bequeathed us as children of our particular time and people. It is as little an æsthetic achievement to see what everyone else sees as it is a scientific achievement, at the present date, to think of water as H_2O. It is the new which we really judge, which we truly *see*, and by which, in turn, we are judged; yet whenever our feelings are concerned we are comfortable only in the presence of what is familiar and well worn. What is really novel rarely challenges a desire to understand and render justice, but almost always an impulse to disregard, to condemn, to destroy. Of course, what is new does not necessarily mean what was produced in the current year; what is old may be new to *us*, or what is remote in space; but the closed mind is as reluctant to see in a new light what belongs to the time of Cheops as to revise its ideas of contemporary events. To see as we have always seen, to think as we have always thought—this is dear to the unregenerate nature of all of us.

An immovable conservatism, however, is no more destructive to the perception of fresh and living aspects in the world about us than is the absence of any traditions whatever. If we have eyes to see at all, it is not merely because Nature has given them to us, but also because other men have found out how to use *their* eyes, and so have taught us. Temperament unguided by tradition yields not originality but eccentricity—a meaningless eccentricity, because it is only by modification

and enrichment of a tradition already in existence that the contributions of individuals can be added to the general store of culture. Between rigid habit and centrifugal dispersion of energies the artist, like the scientist, must steer a middle course: his success depends upon avoiding the extremes of mechanism and anarchy. Only so can he see and, in seeing, create a world distinctively his own. Distinctively, yet not exclusively, for when he has fashioned his world in a form which others can see, it becomes their world also, and he becomes, in so far forth, one of the creators of the human mind.

We are so accustomed to think of the human mind, like the human body, as having taken form when the race reached human estate, that an expression implying that the mind is still in process of creation may seem merely paradoxical, or at least figurative. But the mind is not an organ, like the heart or lungs; it properly includes the whole world of which we can be conscious; and this is built up gradually, through the labor of everyone who receives, transmits, and especially enriches our entire cultural tradition. Since the artist plays a distinctive and irreplaceable rôle in this cultural development, we can only judge his true importance by seeing how the development takes place.

The savage, doubtless, as he looks at the material world about him, can recognize the practically important features of the scene. He can identify the path through the wilderness, the way to his hunting-ground and the way home again. He can detect the color of the tiger's skin, and the cloud that presages rain or the lightning-flash. But, so far as we can judge, the tiger is merely a competitor for his food-supply, and on occasions a dangerous enemy to himself—never a being of whom he would ask the question,

In what distant deeps or skies
Burned the fire of thine eyes?

or

Did he who made the lamb make thee?

If *we* can see the tiger as something other than a large predacious feline of nocturnal habits, with an occasional fondness for human flesh, if we can think of him as a particularly vivid embodiment of the fire of life, and marvel at the inexhaustible variety in which that life clothes itself—if we can do this, it is through no virtue of our own, but because our imagination has been quickened by a poet's touch.

Not the savage only, but many an ancestor much nearer us, perceived a world poor, mean, and drab compared with ours. The Greeks, as their language indicates, could discriminate only a small number of separate colors, and there is little or no sense of landscape in their literature. If "the mountains look on Marathon," it was not a Greek poet who informed us of it; indeed, the sense of Nature as something with a life of its own, apart from the life of humanity, is distinctively modern, and but for the naturalistic bent of mind that came with and after the Renaissance we should probably be almost destitute of it. This bent of mind was scientific as well as æsthetic; but if it is true to say, "The heavens declare the glory of Kepler and Newton," it is no less true to say, "The heavens declare the glory of Tintoretto and Claude Lorrain."

It is not only in giving color and spaciousness to the visible world, animating it with its own soul and setting our imagination free in its presence, that art does its work. No less than material things are our fellow-men transfigured when we see them in the light of art. Even without the aid of art we can, it is true, observe our fellows' actions as they go about their business, marry,

bring up their children, grow old and die. Our weal and woe are too closely intertwined with theirs to permit us to be forgetful of them: we must in any case study their wishes, observe the rules that make a common life endurable, and offer them inducements for services desired. For that infinitesimal minority of them who are interesting to us as persons, we instinctively strive to do more, to offer kindnesses without expectation of reward, and to share the joys and sorrows that lend significance to experience. But while we trust to utility and instinct to guide our human associations, how halting the coöperation, how feeble the insight! Rites celebrated together, song and story embodying common delights and aspirations, are what make shared experience, in any pregnant sense, possible, and these things, whatever their ostensible purpose, are æsthetic in quality.

Perhaps no better example of this could be found than in the rôle that the Homeric poems played in Greek civilization. It is sometimes said that the greatness of that civilization was partly due to the fact that the Greeks had no sacred books, in the sense that the Jews had; that is, that they had no rigid and binding code of laws which everyone was expected to obey in every detail. This is not quite true, since Homer was almost an oracle for them; it is true, however, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were less a prescription of a precise way of life than an embodiment of ideals, which owed their authority in no small degree to the glamour lent by the Homeric manner to the experiences reflected in them. In thus providing ideals which were embodied in exceedingly vivid and moving imagery, the poems gave to the Greeks a fund of vicariously enjoyed experiences, which shaped the purposes and crystallized the feelings of the Greek race as a whole, and at the

same time did not so entirely fix them as to make variation impossible. Hence the possibility both of individualism in thought and feeling, and of communication between individuals, and consequently the birth of genuine reflection and personal distinction.

In modern times the development of the novel is perhaps the best illustration of the work of the artist in making individuals intelligible to each other. The novel is the form of art at present most universally enjoyed, and it is from novels, at least as much as from association with other individuals, that many of us derive our conceptions of human nature and of its possibilities. Furthermore, it is from these conceptions that our ideals for ourselves chiefly arise. Not that the novelist should directly indicate or recommend ideals: if he does that he becomes a moralist pure and simple. His contribution to life, to morals, is less direct but not less essential. Unless we are content to take all our moral laws on authority, we are obliged to judge of the goodness or badness of our acts by their effects on others, by the contribution they make to human welfare generally. To do this, we must enter imaginatively into the purposes of others, and it is in literature that human purposes are most effectively set forth. Law, custom and instinctive sympathy are of little use when we are dealing with the manifestations of human nature that are new or that lie outside the familiar circle of our acquaintanceship: universal human nature becomes intelligible only through art.

To make human nature intelligible to itself—that is the real purpose of art, that, and not any construction of a sanctuary for those who find the world of practical affairs too much for them. The artist makes human nature intelligible, not, like the psychologist, by analysis of it in the abstract, but by showing imaginatively the

very good Summ

objects and activities in which it can find satisfaction. His command of a recognized medium, paint, words, musical sound, is necessary if he is to make what he imaginatively divines common coin, but it is in the divination, the vision, that he really exercises his vocation. This, and this only, is what makes him not a purveyor of amusement but a creator of life.

the real purpose of art is to make human nature intelligible to itself.

J. B. S. Haldane

Science and Theology as Art Forms[1]

RELIGION and science are human activities with both practical and theoretical sides. There is at present a certain degree of conflict between them, and this will undoubtedly continue for some generations. During this conflict the disputants have tended to emphasize the differences between them. But their resemblances are equally interesting, and perhaps throw a good deal of light on the differences.

It is only very recently that they have had a chance of diverging. Readers of the Pentateuch, or of the contemporaneous or earlier religious literature of Egypt or Mesopotamia, will find it very difficult to disentangle the science from the religion. The Pentateuch contains some very good applied science in the sanitary laws of Moses. The palæontology of Genesis is also correct in many points; particularly in describing a period of the earth's history before the origin of life, followed by the appearance of animals in the seas, and only later on land, man being the last creation. It is of course wrong in putting the origin of plants before that of stars, of birds before that of creeping things, and in several other respects.

Unfortunately, however, since Moses' time science and religion have diverged, not without a certain loss to

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[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *Possible Worlds* by J. B. S. Haldane. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928.

both. The reason for this divergence can best be seen when we study some typical scientific and religious minds at work. Each starts from a certain experience, and builds up a system of thought to bring it into line with the remainder of experience. The organic chemist says, 'The substance I have just made is a liquid with a characteristic smell, melting at 31° C., boiling at 162° C., and whose compound with phenylhydrazine melts at 97° C. I have probably synthesized furfural in a new way.' The saint says, 'I have had an experience very wonderful and rather difficult to describe in detail, but I interpret it to mean that God desires me to devote myself to preaching rather than to shut myself up from the world.'

The scientific man then starts from experiences in themselves emotionally flat, though to him perhaps interesting enough. He may end by producing a theory as exciting as Darwinism, or a practical invention as important as antiseptics or high explosives. The mind of the religious man on the other hand works on a descending scale of emotions. The dogma, prophecy, or good works which he may produce are inevitably less thrilling than his religious experience.

It is more interesting to most minds to read or speculate about the distances of the stars than to measure the positions of their images on a photographic plate. But it is less interesting to read a work on justification by faith or on St. Thomas's theory of transubstantiation than to take part in a well-conducted church service.

Now, the rather dull raw material of scientific thought consists of facts which can be verified with sufficient patience and skill. The theories to which they have given rise are far less certain. They change from generation to generation, even from year to year.

And the religious opponents of science tend to scoff at this perpetual change. In scientific thought we adopt the simplest theory which will explain all the facts under consideration and enable us to predict new facts of the same kind. The catch in this criterion lies in the word 'simplest.' It is really an æsthetic canon such as we find implicit in our criticisms of poetry or painting. The layman finds such a law as $\frac{\partial x}{\partial x} = \kappa \frac{\partial^2 x}{\partial y^2}$ much less simple than 'it oozes,' of which it is the mathematical statement. The physicist reverses this judgment, and his statement is certainly the more fruitful of the two, so far as prediction is concerned. It is, however, a statement about something very unfamiliar to the plain man, namely, the rate of change of a rate of change. Now, scientific æsthetic prefers simple but precise statements about unfamiliar things to vaguer statements about well-known things. And this preference is justified by practical success. It is more satisfactory scientifically to say: 'The blood-vessels in John Smith's skin are dilated by a soluble toxin produced by a hæmolytic streptococcus growing in his pharynx,' than to say that he has scarlet fever. It suggests methods of curing and preventing the disease. But only a few people have seen a streptococcus, and no one has seen a toxin in the pure state. In physics, the most developed of the sciences, things have gone so far that many physicists frankly say that they are describing atom models and not atoms. Atoms themselves have the same sort of reality as chairs and tables, because single atoms can be seen if going fast enough. But when we come to their internal structure we can only say that they behave, in some important respects, as if electrons were going round in them with such and such velocities in such and such orbits. If that is the real structure we can calculate the veloci-

ties with a great deal more accuracy than that with which a speedometer gives the speed of an automobile; and verifiable predictions based on these calculated speeds come out with very great accuracy. But the speeds are not observable, and physicists are becoming less and less careful as to what hypothetical events they postulate to explain observable phenomena, provided the hypotheses enable them to predict accurately.

Einstein showed that we could explain and predict slightly better if he substituted other conceptions for those of space and time, and his own substitutes will doubtless be replaced in their turn. Now, if Einstein is right, or even partly right, no physicists before his time knew quite what they were talking about when they used the ideas of distance and time, and practically every statement that they made which purported to be accurate was false. So presumably is every such statement of a modern physicist. Similarly, chemists supposed that the weight of a chlorine atom was 35.46 units until Aston showed that chlorine atoms were a mixture of two kinds whose weights are 35 and 37. Almost all the deductions from the premise were right, but the premise itself was wrong. I have no doubt that biological theory is equally riddled with falsehoods.

In fact, the experience of the past makes it clear that many of our most cherished scientific theories contain so much falsehood as to deserve the title of myths. Their claims to belief are that they contradict fewer known facts than their predecessors, and that they are of practical use. But there is one very significant feature of the most fully developed scientific theories. They tell us nothing whatever about the inner nature of the units with which they deal. Electrons may be spiritually inert, they may be something like sensations, they may be good spirits or evil spirits. The physicist,

however, can only tell us that they repel one another according to a certain law, are attracted by positive charges according to another law, and so on. He can say nothing about their real being, and knows that he cannot.

It is, I suppose, the fact that there is no great stability to be found in scientific theories which leads the opponents of science to talk of the intellectual bankruptcy of our age; generally as a preliminary to adopting beliefs current in mediæval Europe, India, or Bedlam. We must therefore proceed to examine the claims of the theological beliefs which are offered as substitutes or supplements for science. Religious and moral experience are facts. Most people can obtain a certain amount of religious experience by a very moderate effort. It would be ridiculous not to interpret it. But its interpretation is still in a prescientific stage. There is something true in theology, because it leads to right action in some cases, and serves to explain certain otherwise difficultly explicable facts about the human soul. There is something untrue, because it often leads to wrong actions and leaves a great deal which is within its province, for example the origin of evil, unexplained.

In India and in pre-Christian Europe theology developed gradually. Gods or devils could be postulated as required. This, however, led to a polytheism incompatible either with the unity of nature or the unity of duty. Since about A.D. 400, however, Christian theology has altered very little. But the moral consciousness of Christians has altered a great deal. For example, it now condemns slavery and cruelty to animals. St. Paul condoned the one and ignored the other. But it is alleged by theologians that our moral consciousness is one source of our knowledge of God. If the one develops, so should the other. Now, in the early or

growing stages of a religion a large number of myths are produced which interpret the moral and religious consciousness of the time. Jesus habitually used vivid imagery. Sometimes he was obviously speaking in parables. Sometimes a doubt exists, as with regard to the words used at the Last Supper. If taken as a statement of fact, they lead to a belief in transubstantiation. If not, they are merely an expression of solidarity like 'I am the vine, ye are the branches.' Some of his other statements are taken literally by all Christian churches, and it is claimed that a belief in them is a more or less essential prerequisite to a Christian life. This appears to be doubtful.

But where Jesus used parables as far as possible, his followers stated innumerable doubtful propositions as facts, and attached more importance to a belief in them than the followers of the non-Christian religions have attached to similar statements. Some of these propositions were about the structure of the universe, *e.g.* 'The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son,' others about events, *e.g.* 'Jesus descended into Hell.' Scientific man clearly cannot complain of the theologians for making myths. They do it themselves. Sometimes they take them very seriously. Occasionally the public does so. The ether is a highly mythical substance filling empty space, for which relativistic mechanics have little use. But broadcasting has made it a popular myth. To-day probably more men in England believe in it than in Jesus' bodily ascension to heaven.

The main objection to religious myths is that, once made, they are so difficult to destroy. Chemistry is not haunted by the phlogiston theory as Christianity is haunted by the theory of a God with a craving for bloody sacrifices. But it is also a fact that while serious attempts are constantly being made to verify scientific

myths, religious myths, at least under Christianity and Islam, have become matters of faith which it is more or less impious to doubt, and which we must not attempt to verify by empirical means. Chemists believe that when a chemical reaction occurs, the weight of the reactants is unchanged. If this is not very nearly true, most of chemical theory is nonsense. But experiments are constantly being made to disprove it. It obviously cannot be proved, for, however accurately we weigh, the error may still be too small for us to observe. Chemists welcome such experiments and do not regard them as impious or even futile.

Christians almost all believe that prayer is sometimes answered. Now, all prayers are not answered, and desired events often occur for which no one has prayed. Hence individual instances of answered prayers are useless. We must have statistical evidence. It has been proposed from time to time that a group of believers should pray for the recovery of the patients in one wing of a hospital over a period of some months, and the number of deaths in it be compared with that in the other wing. The experiment has always been refused, partly on the ground that 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' partly through lack of faith. Until it has been made, I do not propose to ask for the prayers of any congregation on my behalf.

In the absence of experimental evidence Galton attempted a statistical investigation. He considered that of all classes of society in England those most prayed for were the sovereigns and the children of the clergy. If prayer is effective they should live appreciably longer than other persons exposed to similar risks of death. So kings were compared with lords, and the children of the clergy with those of other professional men. The conclusion to which his numbers led was that these

much-prayed-for persons had slightly shorter lives than those with whom he compared them. The difference was not, however, great enough to make it probable that prayers have any harmful effect.

On the other hand, there can be little doubt that either one's own prayers or the knowledge that others are praying for one may serve as a safeguard against temptation, or effect the complete or partial cure of functional diseases of the nervous system. There is therefore, at any rate, a certain truth in the efficacy of prayer; but this efficacy may be explained on psychological grounds, and does not necessarily imply a divine interference in the order of nature.

Nevertheless, religious experience is a reality. It cannot be communicated directly, but those who experience it can induce it in others by myth and ritual. This fact is most fully recognized by Hindus. The simpler of them believe in a vast and complex system of myths, and attempt to gain their personal ends by placating various deities. The more intellectual do not pretend that the myths are true, or that the ritual has any effect other than a psychological influence on the participants. A well-known Hindu mathematician, who would sooner have died than eaten beef, once asked a British colleague whether it would cause real surprise in England if the Archbishop of Canterbury were to deny the existence of God in the House of Lords. In India, it appears, the corresponding event would excite no more comment than does a denial of the existence of the soul by a professor of psychology, or of the reality of matter by a professor of physics, in England or America.

This essay is emphatically not a defence of Hinduism, which has excused every kind of evil, from murder and the prostitution of young girls to self-mutilation

and refusal to wash. It is, moreover, the chief prop of a system of hereditary class distinctions based in part on differences of colour; by contrast with which Louis XIV. appears an equalitarian and Pizarro a champion of racial equality. And I find many of its myths disgusting. But the fact remains that it has lasted a great deal longer than Christianity and shows far fewer signs of decay. It has more than half as many adherents, and on the whole affects their lives to a greater extent.

One of the gravest errors into which the Christian religion has fallen is the view that a myth or dogma cannot influence you unless you believe it. Christians in general believe in the existence of St. Bartholomew and St. James the Less, but they are much less influential people at the present day than Cordelia and Father Christmas, in whom very few adults believe. If the Christian churches continue to make belief the test of religion, it appears to me that one of three things will happen.

If they maintain their influence they will sterilize scientific thought, and either slow down human progress or render their adherents as defenceless against non-Christian races armed with science as were the Asiatics against the Christian races during the nineteenth century. The Caliph Mutawakkil, who, perhaps more than any other man, assured the triumph of orthodoxy and the suppression of independent thought in the Mohammedan world, was responsible for its conquest by the Christians, when these latter were allowed to think for themselves about the nature of matter and hence to produce steam engines and high explosives. The Christian churches are preventing people from thinking for themselves about life. In the interests of theological orthodoxy Christian children may not be taught about evolution. In those of morality and de-

cency they may not be taught how their bodies work. If any Asiatic people begins as a whole to think biologically before those of European origin do so, it will dominate the world, if the lessons of the past are any guide to the future.

It is perhaps more probable that under such circumstances religion will decline and become unimportant in human life. This would, perhaps, be a misfortune, for it is probably the essence of religion that a man should realize that his own happiness and that of his neighbours are not his only concerns. If we abandon religion completely we shall probably deify ourselves and behave in a wholly selfish manner, or deify the State and behave as the more violently patriotic Germans did in the late war. (And as the war continued the other nations conformed more and more to the German model.)

It may be that religion as we know it will some day be superseded altogether, for many people nowadays lead good lives without it. It is possible to become convinced on philosophical grounds of the supreme reality and importance of the spiritual, without postulating another world or even a personal God. And such convictions may be supported by mystical experience. However, it is improbable that most people are capable of the abstraction necessary if such a point of view is to be adopted. It is even harder, though of course possible, to worship one's own moral convictions, as Mr. Bertrand Russell does, while believing that they are an unimportant by-product of a universe which, as a whole, is indifferent to them. One of these views of the world may well be true, but I do not believe that most people can attain to it for some centuries. And self-worship and State-worship are within the reach of all.

A third possibility is the rise on the ruins of Christianity of a religion with a creed in harmony with modern thought, or more probably the thought of a generation ago. Traces of such a creed may be found in the utterances of prominent spiritualists, in the economic dogmas of the communist party, in the writings of believers in creative evolution, and elsewhere. A new religion would crystallize the scientific theories of its own age. The old religions are full of outworn science, including the astronomical theory of a solid heaven, the chemical theory that water, bread, books, and other objects can be rendered holy by special processes, and the physiological theory that a substance called a soul leaves the body at the moment of death. I remember hearing the headmaster of Eton informing the school from the pulpit that the body lost weight (or gained it, I forget which) at the moment of death. This materialistic view of the nature of the soul is quite prevalent in Christian circles. A new religion would probably include in its creed the reality of the ether, the habitability of Mars, the duty of man to co-operate in the process of evolution, the existence of innate psychological difference between the human races, and the wickedness of either capitalism or socialism.

Now, Christianity has ceased to obstruct astronomy and geology with such texts as 'He hath established the world so fast that it cannot be moved,' and 'The waters under the earth.' It will find it a harder task to admit that it has been as wrong about the nature of the soul as about the nature of heaven. Nevertheless, such an admission will have to be made if Christianity is to survive as the religion of any appreciable fraction of educated men and women. The experience of the past shows that such an admission is not impossible. In the words of Renan, 'Si le parti radical,

parmi nous, était moins étranger à l'histoire religieuse, il saurait que les religions sont des femmes dont il est très facile de tout obtenir, si on sait les prendre, impossible de rien obtenir, si on veut procéder à haute lutte.'

On the other hand, the dogmas of a new religion would include enough of contemporary science to be fairly plausible, and enough of contemporary ethics to be fairly practicable. It would thus constitute a far more serious obstacle than Christianity to scientific and ethical progress in the future, even if it led to a momentary advance in scientific and ethical education.

I therefore suggest the following standpoint for consideration. Religious experience is a reality. Hence it affords a certain insight into the nature of the universe, and must be considered in any account of it. But any account given of religious experience must be regarded with the gravest suspicion. Some of the greatest mystics described their experience in language which is frankly and admittedly self-contradictory. Such expressions as 'a delicious desert,' 'a dazzling darkness,' 'ein lauter Nichts,' 'it neither moves nor rests,' are common in their writings. Others have admitted their ignorance of details. 'Nescio, nescio, quae jubilatio, lux tibi qualis' ('I know not, I know not, what is thy joy and thy light'), said Bernard of Cluny. Where a more definite statement is made, it is even less reliable than the crude interpretation of our sense data. Our ordinary perceptions tell us that the sun, a body of indeterminate size, but certainly not as large as a country, let alone the whole world, rises every morning from a level below our own and descends again at evening. I suggest that the data of religious experience as to the nature of God and his relation to man are no more reliable than those of crude perception concerning the sun and its relation to the earth. In fact, they are less so, for

different mystics disagree with one another. Nevertheless, mystical experience may be as capable of scientific investigation and explanation as sensuous experience, though the process would be more difficult because the experience is rarer. Such an interpretation, provided its results did not contradict those of other branches of knowledge, would constitute for the first time a theology worthy of the name of a science. Whether its conclusion would be theistic or not it is impossible to judge.

The theology, or rather theologies, of to-day are something quite different. Religious experience has so far been described mainly in symbols drawn from everyday life. Some such symbolic expression seems to be inevitable. Unfortunately, the vast majority of mystics, or at least their disciples, have come to take the symbols seriously. Some modern religious literature, however, furnishes a most gratifying exception to this rule. The writings of L. P. Jacks, for example, which undoubtedly sprung from a considerable body of religious experience, are mainly cast in the form of fiction. His account of a future life in *All Men are Ghosts* is the most attractive that I have so far come across, but it does not purport to be accurate. The similar accounts given by the saints are also mostly, if not all, based on genuine religious experience, but they are not for that reason to be believed. Theology or mythology is an art form used to express religious experience. Both theology and scientific theory may be valuable guides to conduct, as well as beautiful in themselves, but that does not make them true. The theory that heat is a substance, not a mode of motion, enabled Watt to make the calculations on which the design of his steam-engines was based. The calculations were right, but the theory was wrong. The Christian saints believed God to be a person (though the Buddhists did not). Their lives were often, though

not always, admirable; and their religious experience on the whole conformed with their beliefs. But it does not follow that their beliefs were correct.

If such a point of view is adopted, the literature of Christianity will come to be regarded as of mainly symbolical value; but yet as showing forth a real experience which could perhaps have been expressed in no other way, at the time when it was composed. An ever larger proportion of the sayings of Jesus will be regarded as parables and therefore to be interpreted; rather than dogmas to be believed, and then fitted, not without strain, to the rest of experience. Christians will learn to take many of the churches' prohibitions no more seriously than St. Paul's veto on things strangled. They will regard their institutions rather as tokens of solidarity with the past and the future than as means of salvation. And they will rank theology with poetry, music, ritual, architecture, sculpture, and painting, as an expression of religion, but not its essence.

Perhaps a summary of the ideal relationship of religion and science would be somewhat as follows:— Religion is a way of life and an attitude to the universe. It brings men into closer touch with the inner nature of reality. Statements of fact made in its name are untrue in detail, but often contain some truth at their core. Science is also a way of life and an attitude to the universe. It is concerned with everything but the nature of reality. Statements of fact made in its name are generally right in detail, but can only reveal the form, and not the real nature, of existence. The wise man regulates his conduct by the theories both of religion and science. But he regards these theories not as statements of ultimate fact but as art forms.

J. W. N. Sullivan

Art and Reality[1]

ON MAY 28, 1810, Elizabeth Brentano, a young woman who is described as having been beautiful, highly cultured and fascinating, wrote a letter to Goethe describing her meeting with Beethoven. In the course of this letter she professes to report a conversation with Beethoven and attributes to him the following remarks:

When I open my eyes I must sigh, for what I see is contrary to my religion, and I must despise the world which does not know that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy, the wine which inspires one to new generative processes, and I am the Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for mankind and makes them spiritually drunken. When they are again become sober they have drawn from the sea all that they brought with them, all that they can bring with them to dry land. I have not a single friend, I must live alone. But well I know that God is nearer to me than to other artists; I associate with Him without fear; I have always recognized and understood Him and have no fear for my music—it can meet no evil fate. Those who understand it must be freed by it from all the miseries which the others drag about with themselves.

Music, verily, is the mediator between intellectual and sensuous life.

Speak to Goethe about me. Tell him to hear my symphonies and he will say that I am right in saying that music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge

[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, by J. W. N. Sullivan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.

which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend.

On the following day, when Elizabeth showed Beethoven what she had written he exclaimed, "Did I say that? Well, then I had a raptus!"

But the question is whether Beethoven said any of it at all. It is an unfortunate fact that the fascinating Elizabeth was not a perfectly truthful person. Even her champion, Thayer, admits that she was not above forging documents, or parts of documents. And the remarks attributed to Beethoven in this letter certainly differ in style from anything to be found in his writings. Schindler, the constant associate of Beethoven in his last years, stated that he had never heard "the master" talk like it. On the other hand, Beethoven was at this time only forty years of age; he had not yet entered into the silence of his last years. And Elizabeth was indisputably far more intelligent and responsive than Schindler. Moreover there are certain points about the report which, when examined, are seen to be characteristic and such as would be difficult to invent. The reasonable hypothesis is to suppose that Beethoven did make certain claims for his music and that Elizabeth, very romantic and somewhat unscrupulous, gave them what she thought was an effective presentation.

The point is important because in this report is almost the only evidence we have as to Beethoven's conception of the function of music. It is a conception which was not consonant with the intellectual outlook of his own time, and which is, indeed, incompatible with the general intellectual climate of the last three centuries. We may assume, as the irreducible minimum basis of Elizabeth's fantasies, that Beethoven regarded art as a way of communicating knowledge

about reality. Beethoven was a firm believer in what Mr. I. A. Richards [2] calls the "revelation theory" of art. This is a theory which, if true, means that art has a significance very much more important than that usually attributed to it. Art must rank with science and philosophy as a way of communicating knowledge about reality. Other artists besides Beethoven have held this view, but there is no room for it in the great scientific world-outlook that was initiated in the seventeenth century and which is still the dominant outlook of our time. And a theory of æsthetics which is serious and does not simply ignore the great revolution in thought produced by science, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to attach to art the significance Beethoven claimed for it. Nevertheless, the fact that Beethoven, who created the music, held these ideas about his music, is not unimportant. It seems easy for some writers, men of quite average sensibility and intelligence, to dismiss the testimony of the greatest artists to the meaning of their own work when this testimony conflicts with the philosophy the critic has found adequate to accommodate his own experience. Such an attitude shows a pathetic confidence in the validity of "established truths." A certain humility in the presence of utterances which presumably spring from a richer context of experience than we possess is surely to be excused. So that we may sympathize with Goethe when he replied to Elizabeth's report of Beethoven's conversation:

> The ordinary human mind might, perhaps, find contradictions in it; but before that which is uttered by one possessed of such a dæmon, an ordinary layman must stand in reverence, and it is immaterial whether he speaks from feeling or knowledge, for here the gods are at work strewing seeds for future discernment and we can only wish that they may proceed undisturbedly to development. But before they can become general, the clouds

[2] *Principles of Literary Criticism.*

which veil the human mind must be dispersed. . . . To think of teaching him would be an insolence even in one with greater insight than mine, since he has the guiding light of his genius, which frequently illumines his mind like a stroke of lightning while we sit in darkness and scarcely suspect the direction from which daylight will break upon us.

The letter is a little constrained, but it is evident that Goethe feels that Beethoven must be treated with respect. It is impossible, Goethe feels, to be quite sure about the limitations of a genius of the Beethoven order. It would be advisable, then, before we dismiss Beethoven's ideas about the significance of music, to inquire into them more closely.

2

By the end of the eighteenth century the mental climate characteristic of the modern world was well established in the general mind. We have borrowed[3] the term "mental climate" to indicate those fundamental assumptions which are current during any particular period and which are the common ground, as it were, of the different world outlooks which are constructed during that period. Such assumptions do not exist as explicit philosophies; they are, rather, the basis of the philosophies created in their time. Such an assumption, unquestioned during the last three centuries, is, for example, that there exists an order of nature. The mental climate characteristic of the modern world is most clearly manifested in modern science, for here the activity is conditioned by the assumptions in a perfectly direct manner. But the same assumptions, for the most part unconscious, can be found in much modern philosophy and æsthetic criticism. For our present purpose the aspect of these assumptions that

[3] A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World.*

most interest us is that they make plausible the idea that art is an activity expressive wholly of peculiarities of the human constitution. It is not a revelation of reality; the values attributed by the artist to nature are not inherent in nature. The basis of this outlook is scientific materialism, which supposes that the reality of the world may be exhaustively described in terms of the abstractions found so successful in building up modern science—such abstractions as mass, force, location in space and time, and so on. In this universe the human mind, itself, in some way, the product of these abstractions, creates values expressive of its own constitution. These values are not part of reality; to suppose that they are is to adopt the "magical" view of the world. Our aspirations are expressive of nothing but our own needs—in the last resort, of our biological needs—and are, in that sense, purely accidental. They throw no light on the constitution of the universe; they point to no universal purpose in things. That the artist reveals to us the nature of reality, or anything but the peculiarities of his neutral organization, is a notion incompatible with the scientific outlook on the world.

It follows from this that art is a somewhat trivial mystery. It is a mystery because the pleasure we indisputably get from a work of art cannot easily be related to our biological needs. Especially is this the case with music. It is difficult to understand why, in the struggle for existence, a peculiar sensibility to certain sequences of non-natural sounds should ever have been developed. And the mystery is trivial because nothing but an accidental and non-essential appetite appears to be involved. On the basis of this estimate of art the theory of "the æsthetic emotion" has been proposed. This theory supposes that amongst the emo-

tions proper to a human being is one particular emotion which is excited by works of art or, more generally, by all "manifestations of the beautiful," and which is excited by nothing else. The emotion appears to be capable of degrees, but also of a maximum. Some works of art are better than others, but it is also possible for a work of art to be "perfect." The perfect work of art excites the æsthetic emotion to its maximum. The nearest analogy to this state would seem to be provided by the sexual orgasm. The classification of works of art proper on this theory, therefore, is the classification into perfect and imperfect, those that produce orgasm and those that do not. Amongst perfect works of art may be a symphony, a line of melody, an epic poem or a Serbian mat. The same value must naturally be attributed to all these works, since they are all completely successful in the function of a work of art, which is to excite the æsthetic emotion to its maximum. The objection to this theory is that it entirely fails to take into account the most important of our reactions to a work of art. It is not true that works of art excite in us one specific emotion, and works of art are not adequately classified as perfect and imperfect. The difference in our responses to a late quartet by Beethoven and an early quartet by Haydn, for instance, is not described by saying that a specific emotion is more or less excited. The one is not a more perfect form of the other. It may be replied that both compositions possess the quality of *beauty*, and that our only relevant reaction, from the point of view of æsthetic theory, is our reaction to this quality, a reaction which is susceptible of degrees, but which is always of the same kind. Such a reply derives all its plausibility merely from the poverty of language. Language, as an historical accident, is poor in names for subjective states, and consequently in names for the

imputed properties of objects that produce those states. Even such words as love and hate, dealing with emotions to which mankind has always paid great attention, are merely portmanteau words. Within their meanings are not only differences of degree, but differences of kind. To conclude, because the word "beauty" exists almost in isolation, that it refers to some definite quality of objects, or that it is descriptive of some one subjective state, is to mistake a deficiency in language for a key to truth.

If we forgo the pleasing but puerile pastime of constructing a philosophy out of the accidents of grammar, and remain faithful to our actual experience, we shall find no reason to believe in a specific æsthetic emotion, nor to believe in the existence of some unique quality of beauty inhabiting all works of art. Such beliefs are merely the first and easiest steps in man's efforts to frame a theory of art which shall be compatible with the materialistic universe of science, in which values do not form part of reality. But it is quite possible for a truer and more flexible theory to flourish, even in this mechanistic desert. We need postulate no mystical similarity amongst works of art, nor suppose that one unique and apparently useless appetite is satisfied by them. We may admit the correctness of our direct perceptions that works of art are great and small, and not merely perfect and imperfect. The feeling we indisputably have, from a great work of art, that a large area of experience has been illuminated and harmonized for us, need not be wholly dismissed. It is true that experience is susceptible of different degrees of organization, and the superior degree of organization of his experience that has been achieved by a great artist may be, at least temporarily, communicated to us. We may suppose that his nervous system is, in some ways, better

constructed than our own. He has not discovered and revealed some mystic quality of beauty; he has bestowed upon our experience a higher degree of organization. For the time being we see through his eyes. But, in order to remain faithful to materialism, we must not suppose that the artist has communicated knowledge; he has not given us a revelation about the nature of reality. Reality is the material of science, and values do not enter into the scientific scheme. The harmony of experience, as the artist reveals it, is not an indication that "all's right with the world"; it is merely an indication that his nervous system is organized in a certain way. The advantage of this theory over the "æsthetic emotion" theory is that it does not require us to do so much violence to the direct reactions we experience in the presence of a work of art. It is true that it does not allow us to take those reactions at their face value; we have, at least partially, to explain them away. But we are not required to reduce ourselves to the comparatively imbecile condition of the "pure æsthete." We are not required to pretend that a fine song is as valuable as a fine symphony, that comprehensiveness and profundity are as nothing compared with "perfection." The richness of the artist's material, and the extent and depth of his organization of it, are admitted to be the factors that give his work its value.

This theory is probably the most adequate that can be devised on the basis of materialism. A work of art does not, as a scientific discovery does, exhibit new factors in reality; it merely presents a different and more desirable organization of experience from that we normally possess. This theory is, it must be admitted, a trifle obscure. If we think of the new ordering of known facts that a mathematical genius may give us we see that the distinction between organization of experi-

ence and the discovery of new factors in reality is not perfectly clear-cut. Probably a long and doubtful analysis would be required to make the point perfectly clear. This analysis, however, is not necessary, for there is reason to suppose that the materialistic doctrine on which the whole theory rests has no longer any compelling force.

3

The materialistic doctrine that has most influenced æsthetic theory is the doctrine that the artist's perceptions give us no knowledge of the nature of reality. This doctrine assumes that the whole of reality may be exhaustively described in terms of the fundamental scientific concepts elaborated in Europe during the seventeenth century. Stated thus nakedly the assumption seems an enormous one. The suspicion immediately arises that its ground is much more emotional than rational, but, in truth, the assumption did have a certain rational basis which has only recently been destroyed. That basis is found in the fact that the elements ignored by science never come in to disturb it. If other elements than those considered by science form an integral part of reality how is it that the scientific description seems to be complete? The fact that science forms a coherent and closed system is surely a presumption against the existence of what it ignores. By the end of the eighteenth century the convincing force of this argument was at its maximum. The triumphs achieved by the French mathematicians, on the basis of the concepts introduced by Galileo and made explicit by Newton, justified the belief that the key to the universe had now been discovered. Laplace's remark to Napoleon that in writing the *Mécanique Céleste,* he had found no need to assume

the existence of God, expressed both the materialist position and the best available evidence for it. But this evidence was, after all, very slight. The fact that Laplace had not found God in the heavens was no proof that he would not find him on the earth. The phenomena of life and mind were so far from being included in the scientific scheme that it was only their almost total ignorance of these phenomena which enabled the eighteenth-century materialists to hope that they would be included. This objection can still be made to the materialist scheme; it has not yet shown itself competent to describe the whole of reality. But the objection has now acquired more force, for the great change that has come over the scientific outlook is due precisely to the fact that the materialist conceptions have been found to be inadequate in the very fields in which they achieved their greatest triumphs. And it is perfectly possible, in the resulting reorganization of scientific thought, that values will be regarded as inherent in reality. Even without this, however, recent analysis has resolved the paradox created by the fact that science forms a closed system. It has been shown that it does so in virtue of the fact that physics (the science on which the materialist outlook was based) deals with but one aspect of reality, namely, its structure, and remains perpetually within its own domain by the device of cyclic definition.

But for the purposes of a theory of art it is the fact that the materialist outlook has been abandoned rather than the reasons for its abandonment that is of importance. Our reactions to a work of art, or rather our interpretations of those reactions, have been largely conditioned by the mental climate brought about by scientific materialism. Nothing is more pervasive or more powerful than such a climate. It is indeed a

climate in that it allows only certain growths to come to maturity, stunting and warping all others. The characteristic of this particular climate that interests us at present is that it has made difficult or impossible the correct evaluation of our æsthetic experiences and for this reason has hindered us in understanding the significance of a great artist. It has distorted our æsthetic perceptions by forcing us to accommodate them to a system of thought in which they really have no place, so that our reactions to a work of art are no longer accepted by us in their purity, but are immediately interpreted and sophisticated to serve our general outlook. For this reason most criticism is concerned with secondary issues which are the only ones that can appear in the prevalent mental climate.

4

For the purposes of æsthetic criticism the most important fact that emerges from the present reorganization of scientific thought is that those elements of our experience that science ignores are not thereby shown to have no bearing upon the nature of reality. The fundamental concepts hitherto employed by science have been shown to be both unnecessary and insufficient. They are in process of being replaced by a different set, and it is perfectly possible that, when the replacement is complete, values will be established as inherent in reality. Even should science be able to progress without importing values into its scheme, that fact would afford no presumption against the existence of values. For one major result of recent physical speculation has been to show the precise nature of the limitations to scientific knowledge. Science gives us knowledge of structure, but not of substance. It may

be assumed that this is the only kind of knowledge possible to us, but there seem to be no good reasons for such an assumption. Science, indeed, tells us a very great deal less about the universe than we have been accustomed to suppose, and there is no reason to believe that all we can ever know must be couched in terms of its thin and largely arbitrary abstractions.

With the disintegration of the three-centuries-old scientific outlook the way is clear for the construction of an adequate æsthetic criticism. It is true, as Mr. Richards insists, that the artist gives us a superior organization of experience. But that experience includes perceptions which, although there is no place for them in the scientific scheme, need none the less be perceptions of factors in reality. Therefore a work of art may communicate knowledge. It may indeed be a "revelation." The "higher consciousness" of the great artist is evidenced not only by his capacity for ordering his experience, but also by having his experience. His world may differ from that of the ordinary man as the world of the ordinary man differs from that of a dog, in the extent of his contact with reality as well as in his superior organization of it. We may continue to maintain, then, the "revelation" theory of art. Indeed, our business as critics is to make it more explicit. The highest art has a transcendental function, as science has. In saying this, however, we must be careful to distinguish between these functions. We cannot say that art communicates knowledge, as science does, for we should be open to the objection made to the revelation theory of art that we cannot say what the revelation is of. But what art does do is to communicate to us an attitude, an attitude taken up by the artist consequent upon his perceptions, which perceptions may be perceptions of factors in reality. It is characteristic of

the greatest art that the attitude it communicates to us is felt by us to be valid, to be the reaction to a more subtle and comprehensive contact with reality than we can normally make. We no longer need dismiss this feeling or attempt to explain it away. The colossal and mastered experience which seems to be reflected in the Heilgesang of the A minor quartet, for instance, is, we may be confident, indicative of more than the peculiarities of Beethoven's neural organization. The perceptions which made that experience possible were in no sense illusory; they were perceptions of the nature of reality, even though they have no place in the scientific scheme. Beethoven does not communicate to us his perceptions or his experiences. He communicates to us the attitude based on them. We may share with him that unearthy state where the struggle ends and pain dissolves away, although we know but little of his struggle and have not experienced his pain. He lived in a universe richer than ours, in some ways better than ours and in some ways more terrible. And yet we recognize his universe and find his attitudes towards it prophetic of our own. It is indeed our own universe, but as experienced by a consciousness which is aware of aspects of which we have but dim and transitory glimpses.

Roger Fry

The Artist and Psycho-Analysis[1]

AS I am no psychologist, my presumption in addressing a gathering of professional psychologists seems to call for apology. My defence is that of late years you have managed to make yourselves so interesting to the world at large that you have inevitably attracted the attention of outsiders. You have let off too many fireworks in your back garden to wonder that strangers have been looking over the wall.

Before the advent of Dr. Freud you worked for so long in a tranquil and almost deserted solitude that this invasion of your privacy may be a strange and disturbing experience. As an artist let me assure you that you will get accustomed to it, for we artists have always been absurdly interesting to the outside world, and are, a good many of us, by no means averse from these self-invited guests in our workshops. And to be perfectly frank psychologists are the latest disturbers of our rest and threaten to be not the least importunate.

That is one reason why I thought it might be profitable if we arranged together the terms on which you would be not only admitted, but welcomed. Those terms are very simple, they consist of one clause, namely, that before you tell us what we are doing and why we do it, we think you should take the trouble to under-

[1] A paper read to the British Psychological Society. Reprinted, with permission, from *The Hogarth Essays*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1924.

stand what we think we are doing and why we think we do it. I know how impatient doctors are while the patient is going through his symptoms but he does generally make that concession to human nature. If after that, you can show us that we have got a mistaken notion of our own activities, that we have unconsciously rationalized them and in doing so disguised their true significance, we will listen in all humility.

What I have to suggest to you to-night is rather complicated. I will therefore begin by summarizing briefly my main ideas.

(1) The words "art" and "artist" are simple enough, but alas they have no sharply defined usage. Artists are a group of people of very different temperaments and some of them are actuated by quite different motives, and exercise quite different psychical activities, from others.

(2) I believe that two distinct aims and activities have got classed together under the word "art," and that the word "artist" is used of two distinct groups of men. One of these groups into which I would divide artists is mainly preoccupied with creating a fantasy-world in which the fulfilment of wishes is realized. The other is concerned with the contemplation of formal relations. I believe this latter activity to be as much detached from the instinctive life as any human activity that we know; to be in that respect on a par with science. I consider this latter the distinctive esthetic activity. I admit that to some extent these two aims may both appear in any given work of art but I believe them to be fundamentally different, if not in their origins, at least in their functions.

To begin with let us get clear about the question of origins. No doubt the question of the origin of any phenomenon is of great interest and importance, but it

must always be borne in mind that the discovery of the origin is not an explanation of the phenomenon. Origins do not necessarily explain functions. The alimentary canal and the brain both have their origin in the epithelial tissue, but one would give an enquirer a strange idea of the functional importance of the brain in the economy of the body if one only stated that it was originally part of the skin.

So if you were to prove that art originated in the sexual feelings of man, that might be a very important and interesting discovery, but it would be no explanation of the significance of art for human life. Not what an organ came from, but what it has come to be, is the most important consideration, though what it came from, and the path it has taken in its progress, may throw a light on what it really is. As an instance take the case of language. Dr. Freud in his lectures quotes a theory of language which I am not qualified to criticize or approve but which sounds to me plausible—it is that when men began to work in groups at woodcutting, building, or what not, they sweetened their toil by shouting together sounds that had a sexual significance and that gradually these sounds became dissociated from sex and associated with particular actions or objects, and thus the original roots of language came into being. Now to argue from this that language is merely a function of the sex instinct would be grotesque. Since it has come to be the vehicle for the whole discursive intellectual life of man—it has come to serve most of all precisely those activities which are most completely removed from the instinctive life. Indeed all human activities must presumably have their ultimate origins in some part of the purely animal and instinctive life of our earliest ancestors.

Science itself, the activity of the pure reflective in-

tellect, no doubt comes from a gradual misapplication and distortion of what was once only a weapon in the struggle for life. What was once hardly more than the animal ingenuity, which enabled man to contrive elementary devices for protection or shelter, has become through that very process of misapplication the purely reflective and disinterested intellectual power of an Einstein or a Freud, and we can show almost every intermediate stage in this long process. Now if you wanted to investigate the real nature of this truth-seeking passion of scientific men, it might be important, no doubt, to discover when it first branched off from the instinctive ratiocination of animals, but you could say nothing about its significance unless you studied it beyond the point where it had lost all traces of its subservience to the instinctive life. To understand the scientific activity you must note that its essence is precisely this complete detachment from the instinctive life, its complete uselessness, its abiological nature, since it exists not to serve life but truth, and this is precisely why those who devote themselves to this activity are constantly in conflict with the mass of mankind which is deeply concerned with life and completely indifferent to truth.

Now one of the pleas I want to make to you is that, if you wish to discover something about the nature of artistic activity, you should study it at a stage where it has thrown off the traces of its origin, has run clear, as it were, of all these accessory accompaniments which surround and, perhaps, cloak it in its earlier stages.

There is such a thing as impure or useful science, and, if you were to analyze that activity, you would find all sorts of biological motives at work, although the fundamental truth-seeking passion of pure science

is distinguished precisely by its independence of, and its indifference to, biological necessity.

Similarly there is an impure and, perhaps, useful art (though the use of impure art is not so easily demonstrated as that of impure science); here too, analysis would reveal a number of elements which really form no part of the essential esthetic activity, and you will make a serious mistake if, after such an analysis, you declare these to be constituent parts of that phenomenon.

If you have a substance which you know to be chemically pure it is clear that you have a right to say that every element which you discover in that substance by analysis is a constituent part of it, but, if you have any reason to suspect an impure mixture, you know that any particular element which the analysis reveals may be due to the impurity and form no part of the substance which you are investigating.

Now that the esthetic activity does mix in various degrees with a number of other activities is surely evident. Take for instance advertisements: many of these show no esthetic effort and do not even try to afford esthetic pleasure; they merely convey more or less inaccurate information about a particular object. You can think of advertisements where not only are the merits of the objects enumerated but the object, let us say a bottle of Somebody's Beer, is depicted. Every detail of the bottle and its label is given so that we may recognize it when we see it in the bar, but there is no sign that in the manner of representation any thought has been expended for our esthetic pleasure. On the other hand I take certain advertisements in American journals, where advertisements are taken seriously and romantically, and I find a very genuine effort, in the proportion and spacing of the letters, in

the harmonious consistence of the forms, and in the exact presentation of the object, towards esthetic pleasure. None the less this esthetic appeal is mixed with all sorts of appeals to other feelings than the love of beauty—appeals to our sense of social prestige, to our avarice, to our desire for personal display, and so forth.

Or take again the case of dress—here no doubt there is often a considerable care for pure beauty of line and harmony of colour, but such considerations have continually to give place to far more pressing concerns connected with social rivalry, in fact to all the complicated mass of instincts which go to make up what we call snobbishness.

These, then, are cases of obvious mixtures, in which the esthetic impulse has a part—but you will say these belong to applied art; if we take pictures which subserve no ultimate use we shall surely be safe. But alas the vast majority of pictures are not really works of art at all. No doubt in most a careful analysis would reveal some trace of esthetic preoccupations, but for the most part the appeal they make is to quite other feelings.

For the moment I must be dogmatic and declare that the esthetic emotion is an emotion about form. In certain people, purely formal relations of certain kinds arouse peculiarly profound emotions, or rather I ought to say the recognition by them of particular kinds of formal relations arouse these emotions. Now these emotions about forms may be accompanied by other emotions which have to do more or less with what I call the instinctive life.

The simplest examples of this can be taken from music. If, as frequently happens, an unmusical child strikes six notes in succession on the piano, the chances

are that no one would be able to perceive any necessary relation between these notes—they have been struck by accident, as we say. But if I strike the first six notes of "God Save the King," every one who is not quite music-deaf recognizes that they have, as one would say, a meaning, a purpose. They occur in such a sequence that after each note has been struck we feel that only certain notes can follow and, as the notes follow one another, they more or less adequately fulfil our expectation, *i.e.*, from the beginning the idea of a formal design or scheme is impressed on our minds, and anything which departed violently from that would be not merely meaningless, but an outrage to our sense of order and proportion. We have then an immediate recognition of formal design, of a trend in every part towards a single unity or complete thing which we call the tune.

Now let us suppose that you hear "God Save the King" for the first time; it is possible that you would get an emotion from the mere recognition of that formal system. I do not say it would be a very profound or important emotion, but it might be an emotion, and it would probably stir up no image whatever in your mind, would be associated with no particular person or thing or idea. But those particular notes have become associated with many other things in our minds, so that when they are played we no longer can fix our minds on the form, we are instantly invaded by the associated feelings of loyalty, devotion to country, boredom from the memory of tiresome functions, or relief that we can now at last leave the theatre. We shall say that that particular formal design of notes has become symbolical of numerous other things with which it has become associated.

Now this simple case presents in easy form some of

the problems which confront us in works of art of all kinds. The form of a work of art has a meaning of its own and the contemplation of the form in and for itself gives rise in some people to a special emotion which does not depend upon the association of the form with anything else whatever. But that form may by various means either by casual opposition or by some resemblance to things or people or ideas in the outside world, become intimately associated in our minds with those other things, and if these things are objects of emotional feeling, we shall get from the contemplation of the form the echo of all the feelings belonging to the associated objects.

Now since very few people are so constituted by nature or training as to have developed the special feeling about formal design, and since everyone has in the course of his life accumulated a vast mass of feeling about all sorts of objects, persons, and ideas, for the greater part of mankind the associated emotions of a work of art are far stronger than the purely esthetic ones.

So far does this go that they hardly notice the form, but pass at once into the world of associated emotions which that form calls up in them. Thus, to go back to our example, the vast majority of people have no notion whether the form of "God Save the King" is finely constructed and capable of arousing esthetic emotion or not. They have never, properly speaking, heard the form because they have always passed at once into that richly varied world of racial and social emotion which has gathered round it.

And what is true of certain pieces of music is even more true of the graphic arts. Here we have forms which quite visibly resemble certain objects in nature, and not unfrequently these objects, such for instance as

a beautiful woman, are charged for us with a great deal of emotion. When to this we add that people are far less sensitive to the meaning of visible formal design than they are to audible design, we need not be surprised that pictures are almost always estimated for qualities which have nothing, or almost nothing, to do with their formal design or their esthetic quality in the strict sense.

To satisfy this emotional pleasure in the associated ideas of images which the mass of mankind feel so strongly there has arisen a vast production of pictures, writings, music, etc., in which formal design is entirely subordinated to the excitation of the emotions associated with objects. And this is what we may call popular, commercial, or impure art, and to this category belongs nowadays the vast majority of so called artistic productions. On the other hand in each generation there are likely to be a certain number of people who have a sensitiveness to purely formal relations. To such people these relations have meaning and arouse keen emotions of pleasure. And these people create such systems of formal relations and do not sacrifice willingly or consciously anything of those formal relations to the arousing of emotions connected with objects in the outside world. Their whole attention is directed towards establishing the completest relationship of all parts within the system of the work of art.

It so happens that these systems of formal relations the meaning of which is apprehended by a comparatively few people in each generation, have a curious vitality and longevity, whereas those works in which appeal is made chiefly to the associated ideas of images rarely survive the generation for whose pleasure they were made. This may be because the emotions about objects change more rapidly than the emotions about

form. But whatever the reason, the result is that the accumulated and inherited artistic treasure of mankind is made up almost entirely of those works in which formal design is the predominant consideration.

This contrast between the nature of inherited art and the mass of contemporary art has become so marked that the word "classic" is often used (loosely and incorrectly, no doubt) to denote work which has this peculiar character. People speak of classical music, for instance, when they mean the works of any of the great composers. It is significant of the rarity of comprehension of such formal design that to many people classical music is almost synonymous with "dull" music.

Now what I want to put before you is that the purposes and methods of these two kinds of art and of the two kinds of artist that produce them are so different —in so many ways so diametrically opposed that when you set out to analyze the nature and function of art by psychological tests, you must know which kind you are dealing with and you must keep your results in separate pigeon-holes or else you will only make confusion worse confounded.

Before I go any further I will turn to what one or two of the psychological authorities have said on the subject. I quote the passage in his introduction to Psycho-Analysis in which Dr. Freud speaks of the artist. This is what he says:

> Before you leave to-day I should like to direct your attention for a moment to a side of phantasy-life of very general interest. There is, in fact a path from phantasy back again to reality, and that is—art. The artist has also an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become neurotic. He is one who is urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous; he longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame, and the love of women; but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So, like any other with an unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality

and transfers all his interest, and all this Libido, too, on to the creation of his wishes in life. There must be many factors in combination to prevent this becoming the whole outcome of his development; it is well known how often artists in particular suffer from partial inhibition of their capacities through neurosis. Probably their constitution is endowed with a powerful capacity for sublimation and with a certain flexibility in the repressions determining the conflict. But the way back to reality is found by the artist thus: He is not the only one who has a life of phantasy; the intermediate world of phantasy is sanctioned by general human consent, and every hungry soul looks to it for comfort and consolation. But to those who are not artists the gratification that can be drawn from the springs of phantasy is very limited; their inexorable repressions prevent the enjoyment of all but the meagre day-dreams which can become conscious. A true artist has more at his disposal. First of all he understands how to elaborate his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and becomes enjoyable to others; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected. Further, he possesses the mysterious ability to mould his particular material until it expresses the idea of his phantasy faithfully; and then he knows how to attach to this reflection of his phantasy-life so strong a stream of pleasure that, for a time at least, the repressions are out-balanced and dispelled by it. When he can do all this, he opens out to others the way back to the comfort and consolation of their own unconscious sources of pleasure, and so reaps their gratitude and admiration; then he has won—through his phantasy—what before he could only win in phantasy, honour, power, and the love of women.

I must ask you to believe that any criticism I make on this passage is not actuated by motives of personal pique. To be called introverted and on the brink of being neurotic does not seriously affect me. Indeed ever since I observed that the only people worth talking to, the only agreeable companions, belonged to the class that morbidly healthy, censorious people classed as neurotic and degenerate, these words have lost all terror for me. All the same I must declare that the portrait of the artist here given is drawn on the lines of a wide-

spread popular fallacy about the "artistic temperament."

Most people lead dull, monotonous, and conventional lives with inadequate satisfaction of their libido and one of their favourite phantasies is that of the Bohemian—the gay, reckless, devil-may-care fellow who is always kicking over the traces and yet gets toleration and even consideration from the world by reason of a purely magic gift called genius. Now this creature is not altogether a myth—he or something like him does undoubtedly exist—he frequently practises art but he is generally a second-rate artist. He may even be a very brilliant and successful one, but he is none the less a very minor artist. On the other hand almost all the artists who have done anything approaching first-rate work have been thoroughly bourgeois people—leading quiet, unostentatious lives, indifferent to the world's praise or blame, and far too much interested in their job to spend their time in kicking over the traces.

Now all through this passage Dr. Freud is giving us the picture of such a brilliant, successful and essentially impure artist—I need not say that I use the words "pure" and "impure" in a strictly esthetic sense without any reference to sexual morality—*i.e.*, he is an artist who realizes the dream world wherein he and his admirers find an ideal satisfaction of their unsatisfied instincts. He creates images and situations which belong to this dream world wherein we are free to play the rôle which we all think we have somehow missed in actual life.

It is quite true that this explains nearly all contemporary artistic creation. You have only to think of the average novel, especially the feuilleton of papers like the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*, and others, which supply every day their pittance of imagined romantic love to hungry girl clerks and housemaids. In fact I

believe the most successful and widely read of these (mostly lady) novelists do really day-dream in print, as it were; nothing else would account for their astounding productivity. These people have the fortunate gift of dreaming the average person's day-dream so that the wish-fulfilment which comes natural to them coincides precisely with the wish-fulfilment of a vast number of the population. Other less fortunate writers have deliberately and consciously to concoct the sort of day-dream that they believe the public want, and these can never be quite the best-sellers.

None of these conditions apply to any first-rate novel —the novels that have endured do not represent wish-fulfilment to any considerable extent. They depend on the contrary for their effect upon a peculiar detachment from the instinctive life. Instead of manipulating reality so as to conform to the libido, they note the inexorable sequence in life of cause and effect, they mark the total indifference of fate to all human desires, and they endeavour to derive precisely from that inexorability of fate an altogether different kind of pleasure—the pleasure which consists in the recognition of *inevitable sequences;* a pleasure which you see corresponds to the pleasure which we found in marking the inevitable sequence of the notes in a tune; in fact again a pleasure derived from the contemplation of the relations and correspondences of form. To give you instances—no one who hoped to get an ideal wish-fulfilment would go to *Mme. Bovary* or *Anna Karenina* or even *Vanity Fair.*

Another immense art industry of to-day is the Cinema, and here too wish-fulfilment reigns supreme. I remember an advertisement of a Cinema with the legend "Let us live a life in two hours." This was a clear appeal to the desire to realize ideally what reality had denied, and indeed there can be no doubt about the method

and purpose of nearly all the films, at least such as are not definitely comic, since the comic introduces another problem which I cannot go into now.

By a process which is mere child's play in the dream life we instantly identify ourselves with the hero, and then what satisfaction we attain! With what incredible skill and what incredible good fortune we foil the villain's plot against the heroine, arrive in the nick of time to shoot him dead, and ride off with the heroine either insensible from fear or just able to cling to us for dear life as we cross terrible ravines on a fallen tree-trunk, scale precipices and crash through forests, and always with the certainty of ultimate and triumphant success! But I needn't labour the point; the theatre with its audience always clamorous for a happy ending is no less obvious a case.

What is more interesting is the question of the real artist's attitude to all this; for, in so far as he has to depend on his art for his living, he is under the hard compulsion of throwing a sop to the public, and therefore of giving some satisfaction to the dream-life in his creations. The whole question of the artistic conscience centres round this point. It so happens that some great artists have had rather easy artistic consciences. Dickens is a noteworthy case of this and you all know how he deliberately and consciously spoiled one of his novels by yielding to the clamour of the public and giving it a happy ending, though by doing so he broke the sequence which he knew to be esthetically inevitable.

But the mere fact that there is such a conflict between the artist and the general public is a proof that, qua-artist, the creator has other aims than that of wish-fulfilment and that the pleasure which he feels is not thus directly connected with the libido.

Freud, however daring some of his generalizations may be, is a man of scrupulous intellectual integrity, and he has generally avoided treating the question of esthetics and the artistic impulse, knowing, I suppose, that he has not the necessary sensibility and understanding. But other Psycho-analysts have gone further. Dr. Jung devotes a chapter of his psychological types to the artist. I wish I could criticize this, but I frankly confess I do not understand what it is about. Nothing that he says corresponds to any kind of experience which I or, I suspect, any of the artists I have ever known have ever had. In fact, I can find no connection at all with real experience so that I must simply leave it on one side, merely noting by the way that, according to Jung, Western Art implies an extrovert attitude and Eastern Art an introvert attitude (Freud you will remember makes all artists introvert). Anyone who knows Oriental and Western Art at all intimately must shudder at the temerity of any such generalization.

I quite recognize that a certain positive turn of mind makes me unfitted to follow Jung's speculations and that I am perhaps unfairly neglecting him. I turn to Dr. Pfister and here too, I will confess to a certain prejudice. I find, according to him, that psycho-analysis can only be safely practised by Christians,—all other religions are dissolved by the destructive activity of psycho-analysis—but the Christian religion has the mysterious power of remaining insoluble. This hardly reassures me that Dr. Pfister possesses that intellectual impartiality which Freud so rightly claims as the chief weapon of the man of science.

Well, Dr. Pfister has a chapter on Psycho-Analysis and Art. He had the opportunity to analyze a youth of eighteen, who had apparently come to him for treatment and who was frequently disposed to paint pictures.

I will read you a description of a typical example "The Bridge of Death."

"A youth is about to leap away from a female corpse on to a bridge in a sea of fog, in the midst of which Death is standing. Behind him the sun rises in blood-red splendour. On the right margin two pairs of hands are trying to recall or hold back the hurrying youth!"

Would you like one more, "Night's highest hope"?

"Night sits as a mother on a rock holding her child on high. Around her lie 'spirits of the night' holding out their hands to her like praying Mohammedans. Rosy-tipped clouds announce the approaching dawn."

As a result of prolonged investigation of such works Dr. Pfister arrives at the conclusion that:—

"Artistic or poetic inspiration is to be regarded as the manifestation of repressed desires and, as such, formed in accordance with the laws by which Freud grouped the processes participating in the origin of neurotic symptoms, dreams, hallucinations and related phenomena, save that a whole is created, the deeper psychological significance of which, however, is not perfectly clear to the artist."

"Everything was present," he adds, "poetic creation, substitution, dramatization. The most intensive use was made of symbolism."

"Everything was present," I should add, except the faintest glimmer of any artistic feeling. The one thing I should know about this interesting young man's drawings would have been the extreme improbability that he would ever be the least good as an artist.

Indeed from time to time my advice is asked about the drawings of unhappy and dissatisfied young men and women, drawings which are not altogether unlike the improvisations of this Swiss boy, and I invariably recommend them not to take up art, because I know

that real artists, even if they are destined to paint highly imaginative works and to go mad in the end like Van Gogh, generally begin by making an elaborate study of an old pair of boots or something of that kind.

I do not for a moment doubt the value of Dr. Pfister's analysis from the point of view of understanding the nervous troubles of his patient. I should think, indeed, that they would be in effect as useful as the study of his dreams, but, precisely in proportion as they were valuable as indications of the patient's dream life, they were worthless as indications of the nature of real art.

For I come back to this, that nothing is more contrary to the essential esthetic faculty than the dream. The poet Mallarmé foresaw this long before Freud had revealed the psychological value of dreams, for in his poem in memory of Théophile Gautier he says that "the spirit of Gautier, the pure poet, now watches over the garden of poetry from which he banishes the Dream, the enemy of his charge." You notice that in this connection he calls him deliberately the pure poet, knowing that in proportion as poetry becomes impure it accepts the Dream. You notice also that Dr. Pfister quite unknowingly betrays how little he knows what art is really about when he says of his patients' work that the most extensive use is made of symbolism. I have elsewhere expressed the belief that in a world of symbolists only two kinds of people are entirely opposed to symbolism, and they are the man of science and the artist, since they alone are seeking to make constructions which are completely self-consistent, self-supporting and self-contained—constructions which do not stand for something else, but appear to have ultimate value and in that sense to be real.

It is, of course, perfectly natural that people should always be looking for symbolism in works of art. Since

most people are unable to perceive the meaning of purely formal relations, are unable to derive from them the profound satisfaction that the creator and those that understand him feel, they always look for some meaning that can be attached to the values of actual life, they always hope to translate a work of art into terms of *ideas* with which they are familiar. None the less in proportion as an artist is pure he is opposed to all symbolism.

You will have noticed that in all these psycho-analytical enquiries into pictorial art the attention of the investigator is fixed on the nature of the images, on what choice the painter has made of the object he represents. Now I venture to say that no one who has a real understanding of the art of painting attaches any importance to what we call the subject of a picture—what is represented. To one who feels the language of pictorial form all depends on *how* it is presented, *nothing* on what. Rembrandt expressed his profoundest feelings just as well when he painted a carcass hanging up in a butcher's shop as when he painted the Crucifixion or his mistress. Cézanne whom most of us believe to be the greatest artist of modern times expressed some of his grandest conceptions in pictures of fruit and crockery on a common kitchen table.

I remember when this fact became clear to me, and the instance may help to show what I mean. In a loan exhibition I came upon a picture of Chardin. It was a signboard painted to hang outside a druggist's shop. It represented a number of glass retorts, a still, and various glass bottles, the furniture of a chemist's laboratory of that time. You will admit that there was not much material for wish-fulfilment (unless the still suggested remote possibilities of alcohol). Well, it gave me a very intense and vivid sensation. Just the shapes

of those bottles and their mutual relations gave me the feeling of something immensely grand and impressive and the phrase that came into my mind was "This is just how I felt when I first saw Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine Chapel." Those represented the whole history of creation with the tremendous images of Sybils and Prophets, but esthetically it meant something very similar to Chardin's glass bottles.

And here let me allude to a curious phenomenon which I have frequently noticed, namely that even though at the first shock of a great political design the subject appears to have a great deal to do with one's emotional reaction, that part of one's feeling evaporates very quickly; one soon exhausts the feelings connected by associated ideas with the figures, and what remains, what never grows less nor evaporates, are the feelings dependent on the purely formal relations. This indeed may be the explanation of that curious fact that I alluded to, the persistence throughout the ages of works in which formal perfection is attained, and the rapid disappearance and neglect which is the fate of works that make their chief appeal through the associated ideas of the images.

At this point I must try to meet an objection which psycho-analysts are certain to raise. They will say that in my description of popular art I have used the word "wish" in the ordinary sense of a more or less conscious wish, whereas Freud uses wish of a desire which has been repressed from consciousness and remains active in the unconscious. The true Freudian wish is incapable of direct satisfaction. The typical kind of case is something like this. A middle-aged lady finds herself compelled at a certain hour of the day to go into a particular room and arrange all the objects in a particular way. She cannot explain the least why she does it and

why she is compelled to perform this senseless act. By psycho-analysis it is discovered that in her extreme youth she was in love with her father and wanted to kill her mother, but that this desire was repressed from consciousness and came out later on in this peculiar and roundabout way. Perhaps both father and mother were dead at the period of her illness, and so any such fulfilment would be impossible but even if alive she had ceased to love her father or to be jealous of her mother.

I admit that if you adhere strictly to the use of the word "wish" in this sense, it is quite impossible that Cézanne's still-life pictures are a sublimation of some such repressed instincts. But you will notice that Freud himself when he talks of the artist neglects entirely his own definition of "wish." The wish in this case is the unsatisfied trying for "fame, power, money, and the love of women." Now these are not repressed wishes, they are, or may be, clearly allowed in consciousness, and they are capable of direct fulfilment. And he goes on to say that it is only because circumstances do not allow of their direct fulfilment that the artist takes refuge in the phantasy world. Similarly I can guess pretty clearly that Dr. Pfister's young man's inventions are inspired by unsatisfied sexual desire and this too is not repressed in the true Freudian sense. In fact I suspect that many difficulties arise from the habit of psycho-analysts of passing from the strict sense of wish to the ordinary sense without even themselves noticing how misleading the results may be. My criticisms, therefore, are based on the use that they themselves make of the word in speaking of art.

Now let me assume that you have granted me my main theory at least, in its general outlines—that you admit that while there is an art which corresponds to

the dream life, an art in which the phantasy-making power of the libido is at work to produce a wish-fulfilment, there is also an art which has withdrawn itself from the dream, which is concerned with reality, and art therefore which is pre-eminently *objective* and *disinterested,* and which therefore proceeds in the opposite direction from the other kind of art. If you will admit this, the most interesting problems suggest themselves for solution. What is the psychological meaning of this emotion about forms, (which I will call the passion for pure beauty,) and what is its relation to the desire for truth which is the only other disinterested passion we know of—what, if any, are their relations to the libido and the ego?

And here I will indicate a possibility which will have to be considered, a possibility which has often occurred to me, but with regard to which I have never come to any conclusion. I have admitted from the first the great probability, to me almost a certainty, that all psychic energy is divided ultimately from the instinctive life and has its source in the satisfaction, at however distant a remove, of some instinctive need or desire. I suppose, but I do not know, that you would trace the love of abstract truth to the reality principle, although, in its higher forms, it has long lost any biological value and has become an end in itself.

I should not be surprised if you were ultimately to trace the love of abstract beauty to the libido, but, even if you should, I should expect you to notice that its relation to that instinctive need is very different from the simple relation of the phantasy-making, dream-like quality of impure, image-making art. For whereas dream-art, if I may use the phrase, is nearly akin to the day-dream and may almost be reckoned as part of the actual instinctive life, the love of beauty implies an

almost complete detachment from personality and from the wishes made by our unsatisfied libido.

Even if it derives from the libido, it does not seek to satisfy it directly in any way. None the less the question occurs: "What is the source of the affective quality of certain systems of formal design for those who are sensitive to pure form? Why are we moved deeply by certain sequences of notes which arouse no suggestion of any experience in actual life? Why are we moved deeply by certain dispositions of space in architecture which refer so far as we can tell to no other experience?

One thing I think we may clearly say, namely, that there is a pleasure in the recognition of order, of inevitability in relations, and that the more complex the relations of which we are able to recognize the inevitable interdependence and correspondence, the greater is the pleasure; this of course will come very near to the pleasure derived from the contemplation of intellectual constructions united by logical inevitability. What the source of that satisfaction is would clearly be a problem for psychology.

But in art there is, I think, an effective quality which lies outside that. It is not a mere recognition of order and inter-relation; every part, as well as the whole, becomes suffused with an emotional tone. Now, from our definition of this pure beauty, the emotional tone is not due to any recognizable reminiscence or suggestion of the emotional experiences of life; but I sometimes wonder if it nevertheless does not get its force from arousing some very deep, very vague, and immensely generalized reminiscences. It looks as though art had got access to the substratum of all the emotional colours of life, to something which underlies all the particular and specialized emotions of actual life. It seems to

derive an emotional energy from the very conditions of our existence by its relation of an emotional significance in time and space. Or it may be that art really calls up, as it were, the residual traces left on the spirit by the different emotions of life, without however recalling the actual experiences, so that we get an echo of the emotion without the limitation and particular direction which it had in experience.

But these are the wild speculations of an amateur. It is just here that we are waiting and longing for you to step in with your precise technique and your methodical control.

I do not pretend that either artists or art critics have made much of a job of esthetics. We have started innumerable theories and abandoned them again without getting at any very positive and assured results. But we have of late, I think, been able to make a little clearing in the approaches to these problems by analyzing a little more clearly than the older writers what goes on inside us when we are confronted by different kinds of works of art and by knowing, or trying to know, or thinking we know, what, as artists, we are after.

I expect and desire that you will test everything which we say about ourselves and our aims as ruthlessly as you test your patients' statements about their own motives, but at least I hope I have shown that it is important to know what class of objects we have in view when we talk of works of art; to know that, if you analyze the pictures of let us say the Royal Academy, your remarks may interest us on the other grounds, but not for the light they throw on the esthetic process in itself.

Ramon Fernandez

Autobiography and the Novel[1]

Le *vrai,* sur les plus grandes comme sur les plus petites choses, me semble presque impossible à atteindre, du moins un vrai *un peu detaillé.* Mme. de Tracy me disait: on ne peut plus atteindre au vrai que dans le roman. Je vois tous les jours davantage que, partout ailleurs, c'est une prétention.

STENDHAL.

(Note in the interfoliated copy of *Le Rouge et le Noir,* May 24, 1834.)

[*Trueness,* about the greatest as about the smallest things, seems to me almost impossible of attainment, at least a trueness *a little detailed.* Mme. de Tracy used to say to me: one can no longer attain trueness except in the novel. Each day I see more and more that, everywhere else, it is a pretension.]

HOW pretend to define the relations of autobiography to the novel, when such a definition would imply that so many perhaps insoluble problems have been solved? From which side should one attack the question with some chance of success? The novel is a very plastic style, too easily keeping the form it is given, and as for the ego, as for the author's personality, what must one picture behind such words, so recklessly employed yet so lacking in precision? When we try to conceive these mysterious relations, ideas escape from us and flee in all directions, but we feel nevertheless that they cor-

[1] A paper read at Pontigny Abbey on September 28, 1925. Reprinted, with permission, from *Messages,* by Ramon Fernandez (translated from the French by Montgomery Belgion), copyright, 1927, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

respond to something real which it is urgent should be known if we wish to dissipate a discomfort which is now growing into an oppression. Now, more than ever, writers are duped by subjective phantoms carefully cultivated by a body of literary criticism several generations behind philosophic criticism. People familiarized with logical thought see being born again, incarnate and disturbing, the theories of an associationism and a sensualism which they might have thought long since surpassed. The problem of personality is set in terms no longer in circulation; but, as these terms are represented by the images of art and the emotions of life, they are served by the convincing force of impression and appear more alive than the living ideas disclosing their inexactness. Now, the problem of the relations of the ego to the literary work is a function of the problem of the ego and of personality. We are therefore adventuring among shoals for which there is as yet no chart. Allow me to mention some of them before seeking with you a way through, perhaps narrow and small, but at least really navigable.

Forthwith, by admitting that it is possible to establish any *order* of correspondence between the ego and the work, one assumes, implicitly but certainly, that this ego, almost equally with this work, is a positive reality, something existing, to which one may attribute the origin of this or that accomplishment, which had a form, in the metaphysical sense of the word, *before* the literary form. I do not claim to condemn *a priori* the substantialist conceptions of the ego nor to contest that there are works which are good graphs of their author's mentality. I should like only to put you on guard against the prejudices which the realism of common sense and Christian discipline have accumulated around the problem before us. Christianity, do not let us forget it, needs

individuals, without whom its morality, and even its dogmas, must be reduced to powder. It must have them at any cost, and, as well as it can, it cuts them out of the stuff of life. And it must have them, note this well, *at the start,* so that our thought is composed hereditarily around individual monads constituting centres of attraction for the fancies, the instincts and the sentiments of which the waves pass through us: the soul is a coefficient the psychological values of which are affected by Christianity, which deeply modifies their relations, their proportions, and even their intimate reality.

Now, without here prejudging conclusions of an infinitely delicate analysis, it seems daring, as soon as one refuses to yield to the movement of habit, to relate to a *pre-existent* unity a set of states which seem to draw any cohesion only from the very act whereby they are attributed to an ego. Before this act, or this judgment, they are only currents and atmospheres, without delimitated zones, unless by making the body the criterion of the soul, one draws roughly, as it were by a material dotting, the spiritual being whose reality it is sought to affirm. But then, in the case concerning us, is not this act whereby the ego is affirmed, the psychic states put together and imposed upon with a unity, precisely the work itself in which the sentiments are inscribed, the instincts liberated, and the fancies tested? Does not this ego, in so far as it is not a succession of moments passively lived, and as such belonging less to the body living them than to the universe which lends them to the body, does not this ego coincide with the work in so far as that work is affirmed as a unity, as an independent force of cohesion, in a word in so far as it is a *personality?* Thereupon, how can one establish a sort of ready-reckoner of the relations of the ego to the work if the ego can be known positively only in the work, if all

comparison of one with the other, conceived as independent realities, is only literature and a vain play on words? I believe myself to be a convinced individualist,[2] but I refuse energetically to call individuality this heap of confused tendencies over which the myth of the soul alone can give us the right of ownership.

Another shoal, perhaps even more dangerous: one is not content with thus setting face to face two realities exchanging their riches; by an insensible motion one goes on to recognize an analogical relation between the order and the proportion of values in one and the other. What is of high importance for the ego must necessarily occupy a no less important place in the work, and vice versa. One thus supposes demonstrated the two truths which precisely are in question, viz. the substantial existence of an ego and the analogy between the ego and the work. Nothing entitles us to believe that the work's centre of gravity, so to speak, corresponds necessarily to the author's centre of gravity, *conceived, not as a writer, but as a man.* For it is quite evident that this distinction must be maintained under penalty of seeing our problem vanish. For an art such as painting, for example, I should not be disputed this point, because it is only in a very inferior degree of plastic culture that an importance of the first rank is attached to the subject. With literature it is otherwise owing to the inevitable confusion arising from the nature of the instruments of

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[2] Elsewhere: *Une Étape: M. Paul Bourget* (*Nouvelle Revue Française*, August, 1926), Mr. Fernandez has defined what he means by an individualist: 'How do you define any notion, fatherland, the state, the family, honour, &c.? If by your feelings, affirm, act directly, and you are an individualist. If by science, take that long and tortuous road which will lead you who knows where. But if your intimate preferences make you reason upon causes, forcibly these causes, chosen arbitrarily, must be what determine the object. Such is the vicious circle into which you will have been brought by the mania for throwing over your feelings the domino of reason.'—*Translator's Note.*

creation. Words and ideas, the senses and reflexes, serve equally for the building of a work and for the building of a man; agreed; but an experience, or a defect, or a quality, which in the life of a man plays an insignificant part, may become the kernel of a masterpiece, whereas this same man may fail to give an æsthetic form to the things closest to his heart. Is not Tolstoi denying his novels a great example? What would have become literarily of Manzoni's profound religiousness without the pure, implacable, and almost cynical, acuteness of his vision? And what would Balzac have drawn out of all his Napoleonic, mystical and scientific farrago had it not been for the two or three accidental and thoroughly material great emotions which rendered possible *Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris* and *César Birotteau?* The examples might be multiplied. I have purposely chosen cases in which the autobiographical origin of the work or the attitude is evident, though in very diverse forms, but it cannot be said that there is any correspondence between the essential interests of the work and the essential interests of the man. And who would be able to measure the relations of Laclos of *Les Liaisons* to Laclos of the letters to his wife? Goethe alone, perhaps, might yield to a comparison of this kind; but Goethe, spontaneously and outside literature, was working on the construction of a personality for himself.

We reach here, in my opinion, a point of extreme importance. If one of the great principles of modern philosophy is true, if things *are* not but *become,* the ego cannot be related to the work in some way or other unless it has been made into a personality, even as different psychological and other elements have been made into a work. *There must be, on both sides, a tendency to independent syntheses.* Then only does it become legitimate to say that the work reflects or acknowledges

such and such sentiments and such and such failures of the author's.

II

Is this to say that the question is insoluble? Such is not my opinion and we shall see in a moment that the sole example of Stendhal is enough to justify our interest in this problem. I should like only to forearm myself against the temptation to establish definitions with ideas that have not been defined. I shall now leap from timidity to audacity by submitting to you some assumptions which I believe are suited to enlightening the debate, happy if their discussion is successful in opening up new views.

Let us sum up and complete the preceding remarks. We cannot start from the ego for the excellent reason that we do not know what it is. Christian monadism can only be a mirage in the actual state of our knowledge. It is not idle to note here that autobiographies properly so called suggest a conception of the ego which brings the latter much nearer nothingness than nearer being: the more their analyses are minute and true, the less do they succeed in seizing a real unity. Whether Amiel's vanishings, Constant's sublime obliterations, or Proust's intermittences, are being considered, it seems that as soon as a great mind seeks to capture immediately his ego instead of projecting its elements and unifying them in a work or in action, he exhausts himself in chasing a phantom which glides through the snares he sets for it.—But from another point of view it is evident that the entire work comes out of the ego like Aphrodite from the sea. A few self-deceived naturalists alone have been able to pretend—and not for long—to an objective art, by means of a puerile artifice which consisted in suppressing the genesis and considering only the results.

These were fancies which nobody now takes seriously. It is with his blood that an artist creates a work in which blood flows. It is with his sensations, his desires, his ideas, his logic, and his skill, that he constructs the world which he propounds to us; our individual life is the only one that we can give. Agreed. But once we have granted this, we do not see matters any the more clearly, for this amounts to saying that the work is created by the artist, a thing we have never doubted. Thus, on the one hand the problem appears to be too complicated, on the other too simple: from one angle insoluble, from another solved before being set and even conceived.

When a question presents this sort of difficulty, very likely the reason is that it is the arbitrary compression of several problems into one. And, indeed, I believe that it is possible to distinguish three modes of relations between the ego and the work connected with diverse and perhaps opposite views. There is first the truism of the creative ego, a very vague and very general truth which here can be of no use to us. Then there is the idea, criticized above, of a comparison of two positive beings exchanging their values. On this principle depends a corollary which must for a moment retain our attention. According to this, artistic creation would be a means of personal knowledge, a discovery of self by oneself, which implies a certain conception of the work which does not appear to me confirmed by experience.

The literary work of art, a poem, play, or novel, is a synthesis obedient to specific laws of combination and development, absolutely distinct and different from the synthesis of our *human interests*. One of the most profound of contemporary critics, T. S. Eliot, thinks that 'the business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emo-

tions at all,' that is to say, specifically æsthetic feelings. His conception of the part played by the author's personality is familiar: in the chemical phenomenon of catalysis the combination of two gases takes place only if a filament of platinum is present, but the newly-formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the metal itself is apparently unaffected. 'The mind of the poet,' Eliot continues, 'is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but the more perfect the artist . . . , the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.' Without altogether sharing these uncompromising views, I believe they contain great truths at present far too much misunderstood. In a general way, *it does seem that the feelings which undergo the æsthetic operation become through that very operation useless to him who transcribes them.* The most restricted experience reveals indeed that the psycho-æsthetic phenomenon is different, in nature, duration, and extension, from the same phenomenon as it is developed in an individual's consciousness. It has acquired a mobility, a generality, a power of contraction and abridgment, an independence in regard to time, and a greater dependence in regard to intelligence, whereby it is made into a sign rather analogous to the algebraic sign, whereby, at least, it is made to enter as an element into a combination which, when all is said, resembles algebraic calculation far more than it resembles a mirror of personality. Paul Valéry said to me once that if the æsthetic necessities of a line had demanded it, Racine would have altered Phèdre's character. I think this judgment somewhat forced, but very worthy of attention. By going to the extreme one might imagine a pure artist who would register human experiences only in forms infinitely abridged and contracted yet pregnant

with poetical developments. He might have, for example, the instantaneous feeling of an eternal love, a feeling which could not possibly be implanted in his duration and be fructified there otherwise than on the æsthetic plane, that is to say, in composition with elements altogether foreign to his ego. Or else, to vary the metaphors, let us say that the artist's experience is tangential to his experience as a man more often than it goes through his centre. The artist, according to this hypothesis, instead of acquiring knowledge about himself by creating, may be said rather to *renounce* those elements of his ego which he incorporates with the work. Possessing them just as much as knowing them.

This idea of the knowledge of self through analysis, so fashionable nowadays, seems to me to be at least as pregnant with sophisms as with truths. There are, in fact, two ways of knowing oneself, viz. to conceive oneself and to try oneself. To conceive oneself is to determine oneself, and I do not think that it is to play on words to add that it is to terminate oneself. The judgment which fixes one of our internal aspects must fall fatally into the alternative of excluding all possible modifications of this aspect or else of acknowledging all modifications as fast as they occur, and of concluding in the inexistence of the ego. This passive and altogether intellectual attitude of the mind receiving experiences as so many inevitable data, suggests the conception of an ego consisting of a collection of states which takes us back to the days of empiricism's popularity. The only real unity of the ego is not the mode of an immutable substance, but that movement, that internal tendency, which drives us to realize a state which, we consider, constitutes or reveals this unity. At bottom, the essential difference between the intellectual who, from a plurality of ego, concludes in nothingness, and the man

who, starting from nothingness, seeks to endow himself with an ego, consists in that the first proceeds by positive assertions and the second by negative assertions. The first says: 'I am this, that, and so on infinitely'; the second says: 'I am not yet this, that, etc.' This *not yet,* it is true, is enough to modify the bearing of a judgment, but it is still from a negation that the will to be is born. Now, guided by a sure instinct, the man who wants to be will never ask that an imaginative combination should reveal to him what he has become. He possesses a far too acute sense of reality to be content with such a compromise and he will carefully avoid such a tangent. And remark that art could not even reveal to him his possibilities, for the conditions of the possible are not the same in art as in life. Whereas the artist, on his side, thinks above all of doing his job and will be happier with a defect which 'fits' his technique than with a quality for which he cannot find expression. And the imitation of others will doubtless furnish him with more material than his own experience.

I do not seek in the least to establish hierarchical differences between the man, the artist, and the analyst. I deem all three indispensable to the progress of sane culture. It is further evident that in reality these distinctions are not so sharp: introspection is an admirable psychological discipline; æsthetic intuition sometimes reveals to us, in a general form, certain facts which we only vaguely discerned in ourselves; finally the supreme works are doubtless those (I am thinking of the *Divina Commedia)* in which the transposition and the æsthetic synthesis of a strong personality have been completely successful. But nowadays we confuse our tastes with our ideas, as introspection is fashionable we find introspective works interesting, and because they interest us,

we confer upon them the honours of the novel which often they are far from deserving.

Perhaps we may now be allowed to draw a provisional scheme of the relations between the ego and the work, merely intended to clarify our ideas and to enable us to determine a third kind of relation which we have not yet mentioned. We have, then, on the one hand, gathered under the name of ego, the universal and anonymous states, forces, fancies, roughly delimitated by a body, by ready set-up social habits and influences, and on the other hand, among these states and forces, elements of volition, a tendency to self-knowledge, to constitute oneself, to self-knowledge through constituting oneself, to an affirmation of oneness, to bring about that unity which does not exist at the start. Opposite this arbitrary ego which, in so far as the *personality-point,* so to speak, has not been attained, is an ego only by usurpation, three ways of expression and accomplishment open out: the way of passive analysis, the way of life or of personality, the way of artistic composition. Beyond doubt these ways cross and recross at several points, but if we rise to a sufficient height above them we see that their directions are divergent. In other words what is essential in each of the three attitudes indicated seems incompatible with the essential in the two others. Introspection takes the rough ego for its object and by a construction in depth, which composes the passive data of experience, is compelled to bring about the ideal unity of a contemplative consciousness. The psychology of personality, prospective and synthetic, can only seek in life, in the individual's action, the justification of a will to be which is confused no doubt with being proper. Finally artistic thought, conscious or unconscious, submits the elements of the ego it is given to a specific elaboration, one of the conditions of which is the absolute disinter-

estedness of the personality as such, and one of the consequences the radical transposition of the latter's values. Thus the ego is the warehouse of inclinations where we all come and get supplied, whatever our goal; but it is something on the hither side of being, a negative value. And to make clearer the point at stake, the work cannot contain positive revelations about an ego which attains the degree of being in that very work only, although the latter may be able to utilize certain elements of the ego in order to discover some truths touching on human nature.

What we are most often misled by are not the legitimate and fecund relations frequently established among the three modes of utilizing the ego, because these relations respect what is irreducible in each mode: what we are misled by are the fictive exchanges, the sleights of hand, which, taking advantage of the mental confusion of the majority of men, mark the cards and substitute illusion for reality. How many individuals do we not know who, introducing surreptitiously into the conduct of their lives, processes justified only by the laws of artistic combination, cultivate a compromise between the imaginary and the real, and offer to us, as personal actions revealing their internal unity, acts which are only able but superficial imitations. How many writers, because they succeed technically in expressing certain feelings, later pick up these feelings for their own account and credit an illusory personality with them, even as those manufacturers who become patriots because they manufacture guns. How many people, to whom something has happened, compose for such an adventure a scenery which is to veritable art what stucco is to marble, or else draw out of this adventure infinite variations, interesting in themselves, but constituting a sort of psychology in two dimensions which in no way concerns life.

All these more or less conscious card-sharpers, comedians or æsthetes, profiteers of beauty or self-exploiters, speculate on the confusion of minds, natural enough in such delicate matters, by suppressing all specific distinction between æsthetic feelings and living feelings, between art and reality.

The Example of Stendhal

III

Now that we have located the greater number of the snares in store for us, we may consider a third way of relating the ego to the work without running the risk of forming illegitimate conclusions. This sort of relation is revealed to us in a particularly typical fashion when we study the intellectual development of Stendhal and the composition of his masterpiece, *Le Rouge et le Noir:* it appears to us as the only one permitting the establishment of a rational comparison of the ego with the work. But for the understanding of what is going to follow it is first necessary to note two or three points which I believe essential.

If we consider no longer the individuality of man, but the creative spirit, the philosophic significance of creation even as it may be discovered beneath the properly technical labour, we see that the work, whether play or novel, that is veritably a work, that is to say completely objectivated, not only satisfies a pure instinct of formal combination: it responds, quite on the contrary, to a deep spiritual need, of a metaphysical nature, viz. the need of affirming the being, of setting down as one and absolute what can be seized in reality only in a fragmentary state, in a hypothetical and relative form. It is a great philosophic irony that the two essential focuses of spiritual life, the unity of the person

and the mechanism of action, remain almost completely closed to analysis. An irony all the more cruel as the balance and validity of any psychology is dependent on these focuses, that it is obligatory upon any psychology both to assume their existence and to behave as if they did not exist. Analysis retains the elements of the person *less* the unifying principle; it dissertates interminably upon action, whereas only from the atmosphere of action—which is far from being transparent to the mind—may adequate ideas on action germinate. A circumference everywhere, a centre nowhere, this is a metaphor perfectly suited to our conception of man; let us add that the division to infinity by more and more precise methods of the radii of the circumference results only in making the centre indefinitely more remote.—Is it not then natural that those to whom it is repugnant to follow either the altogether fragmentary ways of scientific psychology or the hard and disappointing work of the creation of self—that those who are vitally interested by the mystery of being should obtain satisfaction in artistic creation by starting immediately from what cannot be attained by the discursive road, by assuming absolutely the unity of the person and by considering elucidated the mystery of action which becomes transparent—let us note it carefully—thanks precisely to the imaginative revolution which assumes it to be so? Imaginative and not imaginary, for dramatic creation possesses a specific positive value from the point of view of knowledge: it is certain, indeed, that the great works of the theatre and the novel could not contain such precious and precise revelations regarding man if this revolution had not installed the author's mind in the centre of the individual and at the heart of the action, that is to say if this mind had not overturned, in its audacious, unreflecting and genius-like

effort to embrace being, the abstractly-assumed order of rational knowledge.

If these judgments are true, we may give an entirely acceptable interpretation of the relations of the ego to the work. In so far as the existence of the person and the value of its action concern man in the first degree, the creative artist renounces man since the unity of the person and the consciousness of the action are obtained in the work by the roundabout of an imaginative affirmation; but he does not renounce the elements of his ego, which, since they assume a factitious unity of the person, *lose all personal significance and become simply the concrete material, the human stuff, so to speak, of creation.* Autobiography here no longer means 'biography of a person written by that same person,' but, *biography of an imaginary being composed with living elements borrowed from the nature and experience of the author.* The worthiness of this interpretation is evident: the elements of the author's ego become instruments of creation and constitute a concrete mode for expressing objective truths or realities analogous to those of science or religion; the writer's internal life, while retaining its original shades and its free movement, is an integrating part of the means of the work, far from the technique being as a disguise put on by the author.

Nobody, I believe, better understood and lived this transposition than Stendhal, as among other texts, the epigraph of this study bears witness. Remark the trueness 'a little detailed': this detail is the detail of the action obtained by an equation of the feelings and of their objective causes that can be correctly set only in the imagination. The immense and incalculable worthiness of the Stendhalian work resides less in its intrinsic value than in the information which it yields to us re-

garding the respective characters of autobiography and the novel, regarding the vicissitudes of a mind who, with an admirable sense of specific values, contrived to carry to its conclusion an autobiographical work and a novel work without ever losing sight of their irreducible differences or ever mixing the two. More than that: his autobiographical work reveals to us the psychological, not to say physiological, reasons which turned Stendhal towards the novel, which incited him, not to the renunciation of the examination of his ego, but to seek his balance in imaginative affirmation, and utilize this ego for external ends. I believe that these reasons may enlighten the discussion.

The reading of *Henri Brulard*—a work in which memory naturally plays a much more important part than in the Journal—shows this memory to us obeying rather singular laws. The act of rememoration in Stendhal, and notably in this recital, appears subordinated to a mental drive—of which he is not the master and to which he is constrained to submit to the end—provoking a sudden call of recollections. These recollections consist of discontinuous images, stars in the night of the past, presenting two remarkable characteristics: they very clearly have an affective basis, and on the other hand they are only very imperfectly associated—and often not at all—with the external facts which arouse them and with the psychological conditions of their apparition. 'I have nothing but very clear images, all my explanations come to me as I write this, forty-five years after the events.' 'I still see myself listening to him in the first room filled with people and immense in my eyes. But why these people? On what occasion? *That is what the image does not tell me. It is only an image' (Henri Brulard,* I., p. 60). 'I beseech the reader to remember that I have no pretension to veracity

except in what touches my feelings; for facts I have always had little memory' (*ibid.*, p. 199). He stresses more strongly the quite subjective and affective character of his memory: 'I see a series of very clear images, but with no physiognomy other than that which they had in relation to me. Furthermore, *I see this physiognomy only through the recollection of the effect which it produced upon me.*' We see the particular nature of the 'effect,' the affective discharge freeing Stendhal from reality instead of, as in the case of Proust, anchoring him in it. Hence the explanatory part of the recollections is hypothetical: 'But the reader . . . will see without difficulty that all my becauses, all my explanations, may be very faulty' (*ibid.*, p. 56).

These remarks help us to understand the Stendhalian mode of creation and development. Far from determining reality as in Balzac, of figuring the corridor through which it is necessary to pass to attain this reality, the system of causes is clearly relegated to the background. The criterion of reality is victorious here over the criterion of logical necessity. The web of the recital is composed of concrete images, of visions, of feelings, having no other condition of apparition than their very apparition, no other order than the affective reminiscence as the function of a certain mental movement. The essential, what being once given releases all the rest, is a scale of affective shades coming to life again in the order or disorder of life, bearing along with them series of divergent associations.

Does this mean that this opaque affective veil, isolating Stendhal from the external world, helps him the better to circumscribe his estates, to perceive and apprehend the unity of his ego? It is rather the contrary that takes place: isolated from the external world, Stendhal is in a way isolated from himself by the almost

purely subjective character of his recollections. 'But at bottom, dear reader, I do not know what I am: good, wicked, witty, foolish. What I do know perfectly is what things give me pain or pleasure, what things I want or hate' (*ibid.*, p. 314). The priority of tendencies over the qualifications is here evident. Stendhal never got beyond that state of primitive spontaneity which, while maintaining him in the most intimate contact with himself, never allowed him to seize and realize himself. But more than that. This being 'constantly moved,' who at fifteen, in spite of his strong sensations, was 'far more incapable than any other child of judging men,' has at moments a sort of impersonal memory of facts, the resuscitated emotion being then the only element of the memory which properly belongs to him. Thus, for example, he confuses his personal recollection of the descent of the St. Bernard with the recollection of an engraving representing this scene which he looked at some years later: '. . . and *my* recollection is *now no more than the engraving*' (*ibid.*, II., p. 189). Likewise, recalling the fort at Bard, he confuses the impressions of reality with those of a recital made to him of the event (*ibid.*, p. 185). Recalling I no longer know what escapade of his childhood, he no longer knows if its hero was young Beyle or another lad. In short—and this appears to me of extreme importance—as soon as he seeks to get away from the affective zone, as soon as he ceases to make resound 'the sounds of his soul,' so as to incorporate himself with an objective reality, to constitute himself in accordance with a defined social circle, he fatally mixes up the imaginary and the real. Hence, in *Henri Brulard,* he compels himself carefully to isolate the real residua of his recollections, to purify them of any imaginative construction: 'At last, I went to the play; they were doing Cimarosa's *Matrimonio*

Segreto, the actress playing Carolina had a tooth missing in front. That is all that remains to me of a divine delight. *I should lie and be novel-making if I undertook to detail it' (ibid.,* p. 192). If this quotation is placed beside our epigraph, it will be agreed here we have reached the point at which autobiography is very near turning into the novel. The zone of the past in which the real recollections lie is very narrow. Beyle never remained in it very long, even in the day-by-day notations of his journals: is not the Italian Journal already for a great part a compromise between memory and imagination?

Most remarkable of all is that reflective analysis does not put Stendhal in possession of himself any more than affective rememoration does. The passage from one to the other is indicated in those very typical pages of *Henri Brulard* in which Beyle speaks to us of his amorous effusions in Milan. As if dazzled by the intensity of his happiness then and by the violence of the emotions which the recollection of this happiness rekindles, he finds himself absolutely incapable of expressing it, of communicating it to us, and he is reduced to analyzing this phenomenon which thus becomes abstract, general, and ideological, through the very excess of the affective discharge. He is so well aware of this that he admits it in a striking formula which sums him up entirely: 'All these are discoveries which I make as I write. *Not knowing how to paint, I am analyzing what I felt then.*' Let us pick out also in this remark the revelation of his process of discovery, to which he returns very often in his writings: 'M. Daru who at bottom had no wit [but I guess that in great secrecy only as I write this]' (p. 121). 'The errors of the one [the man] of 1800 are discoveries which I make for the most part as I write this' (p. 139). And this even more

striking example: 'I believe I discover as I write that Cardon wore it [that charming uniform]' (p. 141). This means that the writing, the graph of this internal movement, of this mental drive of which we have spoken, puts him in a fit state to make him understand the linking of his feelings, the sense of facts, and sometimes these facts themselves. 'I have felt strongly all my life, but I only see why long afterwards,' no doubt, but let us be very careful—for we are reaching here the heart of the problem—*that this method of discovery after the deed by writing has the effect of modifying the validity of the explanation and the nature of the facts, the former surpassing the individual in order to acquire a general bearing, the latter being as it were masked and deformed by the pressure of thought.* Bearing on a small number of ideas, Stendhal's reflection becomes creative: 'There is one of the great defects of my head: I ruminate without surcease about all that interests me; through going on looking at it in different *soul-positions,* I end by seeing something new in it, *and I make its aspect change*' (p. 18). Besides this text one may place this other remarkable one: 'As I have deepened the same ideas since, how am I to know where I was then? The well was ten feet deep, each year I added five feet; now one hundred and ninety feet down, how can I have the image of what it was in February 1800, when it was only ten feet deep?' Thus, when he wants to seize and understand himself, Stendhal collides with the triple deformative resistance of time, affectivity, and ideological generalization. He does take certain views of his ego, but that ego proves to be reduced to affective schemes, either engaged in a general consideration emanating from him but surpassing him, or else completed and deformed by imagina-

tion, or finally, composed of all these heterogeneous elements.

Affective categories, ideological categories, flying images carried along in the storm of passions, hypothetical or phantasmal character of the object, incomplete ego, often formless, vanishing in emotions or being crystallized in ideas, the point of consciousness and knowledge situated well beyond the present and the action, in the movement of a writing which fixes the formless stumps of personality or else links them together and completes them with imagination, a memory retaining only the affective counter-stroke of experience and rendering the latter interchangeable with others: do not these traits reveal to us a figure and spiritual means susceptible of being utilized more effectively in art than in life, a potential personality which will be realized only in the act of the work, that is to say a personality available essentially for non-personal ends? Let us add that Stendhal's Journals, in which he possesses himself each day in order to lose himself the next day, show him interested by the tactics of life in so far as his spontaneous conduct reveals to him his clumsiness, his incurable staircase psychology. This brilliant and rapid man, who perceives everything in an instant, cannot succeed in adjusting his actions to his intentions much better than Rousseau, although he does reveal himself infinitely more honest than Rousseau about what he sees. In his Journals Stendhal seeks to construct himself, in *La Vie de Henri Brulard* he seeks to know himself, but all his autobiographical writings might carry as an epigraph the first page of the *Souvenirs d'Egotisme*, where he sees that of himself he knows approximately nothing.

IV

I am now going to attempt to sketch the rough outline of the method of Stendhalian creation by utilizing the revelations of his autobiographical work. For the novel side I shall allude only to *Le Rouge et le Noir*. This novel—for reasons which this is not the place to exhibit—appears to me of a superior æsthetic nature to that of Stendhal's other novels, except perhaps *Lucien Lewen*. Besides, you all have present in your memory the essential features of this great book, and that will spare us unnecessary quotations.

The special charm of Stendhal's superiority comes from a something, I know not what, unexpected and accidental, which always accompanies its evidences. It is the crush of professors barely weaned from books, both disconcerted and ravished by the absence of all proof, of all demonstration, by this miraculous flowering, without roots and without tutors. A great writer ordinarily bears with him certificates of his superiority, a literary technique, an objective logic, singular qualities of vision or style, principles firmly established: they constitute his spiritual sign analogous to the shopkeeper's sign. Stendhal allows himself to be guaranteed by nothing of the sort. His creations are brought off against a perfectly neutral and as it were inexistent background, as mysterious for us as was for him, when he came to mathematics at Grenoble, a positive sum of negative numbers. He ceases at every line to be mediocre without its being possible to say why or how. Always with steam up even when he is not advancing, he is unrivalled in the art of obtaining the reader's credit, although he does not obtain this credit with title-deeds, but by the mere magnetism of a vital movement without precise contours. It seems that Stendhal must

have wanted to purify his work of all artifice and even of all definable art, in order to make stand out the essential traits of a deeper art, more intimately fused in the very life of the mind; so that those who, like Mr. Victor Giraud, cannot perceive either this fusion or the subtle rhythm of this life, discover nothing in Stendhal which is not spotted with mediocrity and vain pretension. On another side, his admirers especially stress his intellectual superiority, his rationalism, and his 'algebraism,' as if the analytical framework of the work ensured its balance and solidity.

I believe that we shall take a different view of the Stendhalian novel if we care to go back to the preceding considerations. Beyle's autobiographical notes have revealed him to us on the horns of a dilemma: on the one hand, his personal experience, and consequently his being, tend to be reduced to pure affectivity, on the other hand, the excess of this affectivity turns him fatally aside towards ideology: between the emotion and the idea which both depersonalize him, how can he succeed in affirming the being, the unity and reality of which interest him still more—let us make no mistake —than ideological discovery? Let us notice at once that this affirmation of the being is not necessarily identified by Stendhal with an affirmation of the ego. As early as his adolescence he pursued, parallelly and with an equal good faith, his attempts at being a man and his attempts at being an artist. But this dilemma comprises for him an æsthetic translation, as this remark in his Journal testifies: 'Brissot makes me think that the qualities of the philosopher, that is to say of him who seeks to know the passions, and of the poet or him who seeks to paint them to produce a certain effect, are incompatible.' Now Stendhal is thrown into analysis by excess of emotion; is emotion, therefore, an obstacle for him in

the painting of emotion? Here he is, believing that he has found shortly afterwards a suitable solution: 'There is a way of moving which is to show the *facts*, the *things*, without telling of the effect.' This note sets going what one might call a theory of indirect or objective lyricism as it was cultivated in the second half of the nineteenth century, notably by Ibsen, and formulated recently by T. S. Eliot in his analysis of the objective correlative of emotion. The relation of emotion to the 'facts' should be thus conceived: *the latter express emotion not directly and as a mirror reflects an object, but in so far as their mode of apparition and articulation to one another is determined by it.* Now we have seen that Stendhal's memory remembers badly, or does not remember at all, the facts determining emotion in real experience: to affirm the being, to establish a synthesis, not primarily ideological, but living and concrete, of the subject and the object, Beyle is thus led to operate an imaginative conversion, to bring it about that his emotion re-creates facts. Here the *coup d'état* forces itself, and it is a radical one.

I do not need to remind you that *Le Rouge et le Noir* is composed upon an affective web, that emotion is its kernel and principle of development, whether it is a question of the encounter of Julien and Mme. de Rênal, of the evening in the garden when Julien takes the latter's hand, of the arrival of the young peasant at the seminary, of his amorous vicissitudes with Mathilde, or of the attempted murder in the church. *Now, all these scenes have this that is remarkable about them, that emotion is not expressed in them, at least formally,* but represented as by a graph, by notations of facts of which the choice and order of succession are determined by the emotion itself. It is enough to say that this graph is neither an analysis nor an abstract construc-

tion, still less a putting-together of documents in the manner of the naturalists. What is the nature of the emotion and what is its place in the work? The subject of it is usually an individual in full activity, coming to the action furnished with certain ideas which are immediately modified by this action. It further presents two characters of the first importance, which indeed complete each other. In so far as the articulation of facts with one another is concerned, as it is produced by the movement of the action and its affective counter-strokes, no conducting wire makes it possible to compose it from the outside. The novel is formed by a set of synthetic moments of absolute psychic states engendering one another, *and this continuous creation can be regulated only by the writer's duration, by the association of his internal states.* And as for the analysis, *that is posterior to the dramatic synthesis, the discovery being born of the movement of the writing which re-creates in its detail the movement of life.*

The composition of the Stendhal novel is identical with the internal composition of a mental and sensible life in the atmosphere of action, but, on the one hand, having become transparent to analysis and as it were intellectually erected, and on the other hand, lending its psychic mechanism to various characters, to various types of *dramatis personæ.* We have seen that the Stendhalian heroes go into action furnished with certain ideas, which are part of their characters as these are conceived by the author. In the early years of the century Beyle had devoted himself to a deep study of comic psychology, that is to say of the art of making definite characters live. That he acquired in this a great mastery is something which Sorel, Mme. de Rênal, Mathilde, M. de la Mole, do not allow us to doubt. But what should especially interest us here is the way

in which these ideas, these analytic schemes, are set going upon the duration of Beyle, who carries them along, makes them tractable, and transforms them. Gifted for physical imitation, and anxious to conceive what he calls the *extent* of a character—that is to say, the zone of his possible acts—Stendhal, thanks to the plasticity and the impersonality of his ego, immediately accords his conception to the rhythm of his internal life. But this rhythm, even as the concrete modalities of his duration, modify in turn the conception: the detail of the action, rendered conscious by the æsthetic symbolism, reveals traits which the original analysis could not have seized and which suggest fresh analysis. Stendhal's characters escape incessantly from their definitions because they go and seek in the heart of the action the secret of fresh definitions; but these discoveries are rendered possible only because the author lets himself live freely within the objective limits of a unity incessantly destroyed and incessantly re-formed by the very affirmation of life.

Stendhal discovers in imaginative conversation, disciplined by analysis, the means of an affirmation and a consciousness of the being which his personal experience did not afford to him or afforded incompletely. It is not only 'a trueness a little detailed' that he demands from fiction: he wants something more urgent, more essential perhaps than truth, the sentiment of a life which is ordering and knowing itself, of a world in which personalities are affirmed by enduring and are confirmed by conflicts which oppose them to one another, of a world in which is revealed the secret and ever-threatened harmony of life and reason. But for this he has to consent to this world's borrowing from him its spontaneous modes of conception and development, he has to consent to become the form of a living matter which belongs

to him no longer from the very instant in which he defines it. One may certainly say that he possesses himself in losing himself, but it is thanks to this alienation of self that he inscribes his work in an indefinable order which defies all factitious objectivism and all rudimentary conceptualism; thanks to it also, the being which defines itself in his consciousness he first felt come to birth in the most intimate part of his ego.

V

It is difficult for me, I admit, to draw a universal conclusion from a particular experience however typical. At most does Stendhal's example enable us to get a glimpse of the mechanism of creation in the great animators of fictive beings, more in conformity, we may believe, with the Stendhalian mode than with, for example, the Balzacian mode, but the relations of the autobiographical part and the novel part of Beyle's work make of the latter a privileged case for the problem concerning us, a case whence we may draw a few solid principles proper for our guidance in our ulterior researches.

1. First we must relegate to the background, as being of minimum importance and yet susceptible of misleading us, all notes and remarks having assumed the form of an objective biography. The fact that this or that novelist of love loved this or that lady in a certain fashion teaches us exactly nothing from the æsthetic point of view. The experience of love and the painting of love represent two developments, two orientations, and as it were two different colorations, of the inner life of this novelist without its being possible to establish between them the least positive correspondence. Apart from our reconstructing the personal love nine

times out of ten with the elements of the fictive love, we have not even the right to rely on the revelations of a correspondence or of a journal, which may have been written under the influence of the work or of the ideal integrated by this work, which are in any case themselves the result of an *a posteriori* construction. A still greater distrust must be observed in regard to the gossipings of opinion, even if it be the opinion of the writer's intimates, for we know that the man disguises himself as often before his friends as before the public, though for different reasons. We must also neglect biographical anecdotes—such as Julien Sorel's spelling mistake—which do not appear in the work until the latter is already essentially constituted and therefore have nothing necessary about them.

2. If we must take care not to set out from an *objective* conception of the life of the writer, this is in order not to let go the prey for the shadow by substituting an often misleading arbitrary image for the tendencies and impulsions which alone may enlighten us; tendencies and impulsions of which the synthetic unity is inexistent originally, in what is vulgarly called the ego, but is formed at the same time as the æsthetic synthesis with which it makes one. Then our analysis, to be indeed rational, must be submitted to the organic rules of the work in question. It is therefore necessary to consider this work not as a more or less successful psychological disguise—except to see in it the sign of a work that has failed—but as a spiritual affirmation, an effort to unify and think life according to certain determined concrete modes. This is why it seems useless to dally with the imaginative after-touches which the author may, willingly or otherwise, have added to his own portrait: for in addition to the portrait being itself no doubt for a great part imaginary, the inventions of

the creative mind may have a more general bearing, that is to say contain more truth, than the empirical description of the ego. This principle would not be surprising if it were formulated in connection with a discipline such as mathematics for example, in which by the objectivity of the rules a line of rigorous demarcation is drawn between the ego and the work, of the man of science: now, there is more resemblance than is believed between the diverse manifestations of the mind, and if modern logicians stress the share of creative invention in mathematical demonstration, æstheticians, on their side, insist on the specific character, irreducible to psychologism, of the combinations of art.

3. Nevertheless, as dramatic literary art uses signs which evoke the familiar representations of human life, it may be worth while attempting to establish a correspondence between the work and the ego, but the critic must then be twice as prudent. All thought, however abstract, is a movement, an intellectualized action; still more so must concrete dramatic thought be the spiritualization of acts similar to those constituting the conduct of a life or the being of a personality. But, just so, there are very few chances that a same line of action will be as it were drawn in duplicate, even if one were considered as the negative of the other. For remark that the artist cannot speak of his 'unsatisfied aspirations' except in so far as he relates these to what he imagines of his being, of his personality: discovering a void there where he expected to find a solid, he is terrified by his nothingness, when perhaps these aspirations are nothing but *technical aspirations*, so to speak. Let a man be animated by certain tendencies which cannot be realized and ordered except in the severe rationality of mathematics; imagine this man, still hanging back in the neutral zone of the ego and

unconscious of the veritable end of his tendencies, seeking to satisfy them in an order incompatible to them, social life for example, or the conduct of private life: if he is sensitive, he will suffer the same anguish as our artist and for the same reasons. The great metaphysical void of existence is often only the lack of an appropriate technique. A consequence of the romantic revolution is this intervention upon any pretext and no pretext of the phantom of personality, the vague silhouette of which is evoked only in order that its vanishing may be forthwith deplored. All that may be said is that the author carries into his work the active and ideal tendencies which he fails to be able to invest in life.

4. In so far, and in so far only, as it is permissible for us to utilize the example of Stendhal, it may be concluded that certain men find in artistic logic more favourable conditions than in their lives for this affirmation and this consciousness of the being towards which all our efforts tend. In that way the work possesses a metaphysical value, reveals to us, when we know suitably how to question it, the inclinations and the postulates of the mind. But on the other hand this example reminds us that all work of the front rank must present the essential forms of an individual life lived from the inside, as much in its affective web as in its concrete modes of articulation. And it is in this manner only that it is legitimate to conceive the immanence to the work of the ego.

Ramon Fernandez

On Classicism[1]

CLASSICISM today, at the centenary of romanticism, is receiving an ovation almost as brilliant as that once accorded its lyrical, seductive, and supple adversary. It seems as though this year would permit one to formulate, with new hope, the principles of a classic renaissance. A few months ago Herr Curtius' bold and clear article appeared. Mr. Middleton Murry raised a storm in *The Monthly Criterion* by his essay on the need for a new synthesis.[2] Both Germany and England have shown signs of a search that had seemed strictly French. All Europe is at the present time preoccupied with the problem of coördination, of insuring the rôle of reason in the human symphony, of taking care not to be shut up in sensibility, of subordinating values to an idea of the whole.

The present formulation of classic unity differs widely from the old formulation by the neo-classicists, who emphasized content as much as form in their works. For them, classicism was a certain manner of having been classic, which haunted their very style. Louis XIV, Racine, and Paul-Louis Courier adopted the world of their images and their ideas. The new champions of

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[1] Reprinted from *The Symposium*, January, 1930, by permission of the Symposium Press, New York. Translation by A. Hyatt Mayor.

[2] These articles were published in the September, 1927, number of the *Revistade Occidente*, and in the November, 1927, number of *The Monthly Criterion*.

classicism are trying, on the contrary, to give form to an altogether modern world. They bear the stamp of impressionism, symbolism, the philosophy of intuition, and the ideas to which these doctrines have given birth. They have learned their poetry from Claudel, their sensibility from Proust, their ideas from James and Bergson. The harmony and the unity they invoke should be a summa, an integration, but not a substitution. The probable metamorphosis of these unified elements would be very different from the verbal sleight of hand that pretends to resurrect virtue out of the mere re-use of antique images.

It is needless to say that this is a living problem, and not a squabble of the schools. We are not trying to decide whether classicism or romanticism is right, not whether these words have been correctly defined, but we are trying to abolish an antithesis which everyone feels to be arbitrary. The "classic" idea of classicism will probably emerge from this inquiry, whatever its outcome, profoundly changed. But this "classic" idea would seem to have become fixed and petrified in history by an accident that in no way represents the legitimate tradition of the spirit.

The great romantic movement at the end of the eighteenth century accustomed us to a certain sequence in classicism and romanticism; this sequence is not the normal one. Romanticism is held up as a reaction against classicism, a counter tempo in the rhythm, while actually it has been classicism, whenever it has shown real vitality, that has reacted against a romanticism self-condemned by its excesses. Later on these two termini were abstracted from time in order to build up an antithesis, although really they are interlocked in alternative succession throughout one continuous history. When neo-classicists condemn romanticism they

think themselves back into a period before romanticism; and romanticists, on their side, feel they are getting rid of a constricting shell, and they lose sight of the time when that shell was formed. The history of ideas teaches a very different lesson. In reality, a living classicism is the culmination of a romantic growth; by no means its denial, but rather its reformation and its apotheosis.

Romanticism is concerned with foraging for supplies, classicism with direction. When man has supped his full of feelings, sentiments, and images, how shall he spend his energy? The whole question is whether he will feel a certain need, the need for bringing judgment into his inner world. This judgment will act like an untried reagent in a chemical compound. It will change the composition of the parts, will destroy some, and may cause an explosion. The bringing of judgment into the life of the mind is an event as strange, as exciting, and as "romantic" as the most savage exaltations of imagination and feeling. It probably answers a need as compelling as the ecstasy of the mystic, or the poet's rapture. It is at least as hazardous. The man who shuts himself up in his own feeling remains his own accomplice till death, while he who is ruled by judgment, and must measure himself by an objective scale, never knows in what relation he will be placed to himself. The desire to judge is no more to be willed than the desire to suffer, but it does not bear coddling so well.

Considered thus, a classic achievement is the opposite of what the textbooks say; it is above all a personal achievement, a happy exception, more or less favored by the tendencies of the time. It has never been clearly enough brought out how far the perfection of the seventeenth-century classicists was an individual success, encouraged, it is true, by the *élan vital* of their society,

but got by main force in spite of romantic oppositions breaking out everywhere. To be convinced of this it is enough to study the triple reaction of Montaigne, Cervantes, and Shakespeare to a world which could not distinguish truth from imagination: Montaigne, who feels his way through the tangles of the Renaissance and reduces thought to the heroic modesty of touch; the actor Shakespeare, whose thoughtful mimicry gives birth to crowds of individuals suspended between dreaming and waking by the magic of Prospero's wand; Cervantes, held above himself by nothing but the force of his thought judging a world it cannot replace, which it would enjoy even while denouncing—harmony of judgment and vision at one in a scrupulous conflict where neither betrays the other nor itself. In these three extraordinary men we see classicism in its unforeseen and uncoördinated first promptings, we see judgment irresistibly invading them, an invasion all the more significant since this judgment has freed itself from scholastic logic and has not yet worked out a new method. It is remarkable that, with regard to imagination and mythology, the rebirth of reality in literature is not to be distinguished from the revolutionary efforts of thought.

On the other hand, the nineteenth-century English novel, especially during the second half of the century, is the classic accomplishment of a growth that sprang from romanticism. Many of the English novelists of this time are poets who confront their lyrical inheritance with the world of men as revealed by their observation. Thus the English novel contributes what was lacking to the romantic movement: (in the realm of human, not of literary values) above all the *resistance* of thought to emotion, of life to death, the comic and the tragic. We feel this in Meredith, who found comic

judgment, and in Hardy, building up his marble walls of tragedy. George Eliot supplemented her stock of feeling, imagination, and novelist's intuition with a universal and objective judgment, whose roots grow deep in romantic soil. This alliance makes an intellectual shelter for the heart, an original classicism, which, though it was perhaps provisional and made by the moment, yet differed more profoundly from the spirit of romanticism than any former classicism.[3] Thus classicism breaks down and is built up again, and, like man himself, it achieves that which had seemed at first to deny it.

The desire for judgment by no means implies a renunciation of the wealth of feeling; it means only that man, after having proved his powers, wants to complete and harmonize them by adapting them more exactly to the world and to himself, and that he accepts all the consequences of this exactitude. The great weakness of the neo-classicists is that they set out to *feel* only what they have already *comprehended.* That is not the procedure of true classicism, which is to throw a new world of feeling open to the intelligence. This is clearly to be seen in works of comedy, works which belong to periods of transition and redirection. Judgment in comedy is peculiar in this, that it expresses itself indirectly by exhibiting the thing it condemns. Chivalry

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[3] The French must beware of a very natural leaning toward identifying classicism with French classicism. The masters of the *grand siècle* had definite problems to solve; it is by no means clear that all these problems were put by the classic spirit, nor that the successes of the seventeenth century answered all the problems of classicism. M. Bray, in his masterly work, *La Formation de la Doctrine Classique,* has traced the stages of this formation and has formulated the three principles ("imitation," "the rulès," "taste") which swayed the best minds from Ronsard to Boileau. But this Italian-French classicism is only a moment in the life of classicism, which can take on very different aspects, as the examples cited above bear witness.

in *Don Quixote,* preciosity and Corneille's rhetoric in Molière, sentimentality in Fielding and Meredith, tales of terror and the early romanticism in *Northanger Abbey,* each one cancels out in expressing itself. All great comedians are classicists, even should one accept the idea that they condemn themselves, for the world they carry in them, born of imagination and sensibility, can be defined only in a judgment incompatible with it, from which the comic vision results.

We have referred to the classicism of Montaigne. At the opposite pole of the spirit, Dante holds a key to the universe that allows him to give objective significance and order to his feelings. Dante is a classicist because for him the reality of his feelings is one with their order. Molière is a classicist because the measure of his feelings and his humours is not given by themselves, but by a rational judgment. Montaigne is a classicist because the knowledge of himself that he has accumulated is not the same as the particular knowledge that each successive state of mind tries to impose on him. In each of these three men, the conquest of judgment marks the culmination of spiritual growth.

Classicism strives to be complete, even to its own detriment, and it does not feel itself complete unless it appeals to the intelligence. The desire to judge, and to order one's life by judgment, concerns more than mere abstract activity; it is no intellectual game, but a vital need. He who, at a certain time in his growth, submits himself to judgment, demands that it shall confirm and stabilize his being, and, what is more, be its culmination. Judgment is for classicism the third dimension of the moral nature. At times this dimension is real, as in Montaigne, at times it is sham, as in the decorative pseudo-classicism of the baroque. The classic judgment truly belongs to the order of being, since

it is the forces of being, in the push of their growth and in their will to perfection, that oblige man to complete himself through his intelligence.

Since classicism marks the culmination of a growth, it is natural that it should be multiform. By definition, there ought to be as many forms of classicism as there are spiritual experiences to perfect. Some minds are spontaneously classic, and in them judgment goes hand in hand with sensibility, as in Shakespeare, Racine, and Goethe at their best. Some classicisms come late and are the fruit of long and painful effort. Then there is a restricted classicism and a generalized classicism. At some periods judgment commands but a limited ground; at others, as in Dante's, the logic of the times lays the whole universe open to intelligibility; at still other periods, as in ours, the human background is so peculiar that romanticism pretends vainly to maintain an irreducible difference. This pretension must be examined.

Both the emotional fringe of our mental life and the quick motions that make up action seem by their very nature to escape judgment. When we feel and when we act we are closely aware of ourselves, and at the same time we think ourselves indefinable. Our inner world seems incommunicable. The romantic revolution at the end of the eighteenth century parodied the classic procedure when it patterned thought after feeling. For even when we approach our feeling without reflection, we cannot help trying to complete ourselves by thought. By reversing the natural order of this process of completion, we make judgment spring from feeling. The magnificent development of physical science in the nineteenth century was classic because the natural order of growth was respected in the laboratory. But because feeling and action usurped an ever larger place in the arts, and still more in the conduct of life, philosophy,

whose business it is to connect feeling with thought, was turned aside and then overcome by the romantic inversion, and it parcelled out man's "faculties" into the places that art and science made for them. The scientific "intelligence" became divorced from the artistic "sensibility"; the rational quantity from the esthetic quality. Naturalism and symbolism are two different evidences of this break, as is also the "anti-intellectual" philosophy that tried to organize romanticism. If it is true that Proust embodies all these tendencies, then is there not an unusual significance in the efforts he made to reconcile his strictly classic intelligence with what he called the "qualitative essence" of individuals, thus seeking the traditional order?

Marcel Proust was probably more completely swamped by feeling than any other mind of our age. But even with this overflowing and abnormal affectivity, he laboured only to add to the sum of his intelligence. When M. Paul Souday likens Proust to the Goncourts, he forgets to bring out Proust's advance over the Goncourts, the transposition of impressionism into the sphere of judgment. When Proust, in *Le Temps Retrouvé*, exorcises time by elucidating his obsession by time, he places himself among the classicists, although leaving a difference between them and him such as exists between, let us say, George Eliot's humanism and Montaigne's. Proust differs from the impressionists by his impulse toward being, toward following out rigorously the implications of his own nature, toward completing himself by an appeal to judgment. *Le Temps Retrouvé* is full of texts on this point:

"Impressions such as I was trying to make permanent could not but vanish at the touch of a direct enjoyment—an enjoyment which had been unable to give them birth. The one way to extract more of their flavor

was to try to know them more completely on their own ground, that is, in me, and to make them clear to their very depths."

"This case was like the other, and it made no difference whether it was a question of an impression, such as I had had from seeing the belfries of Martinville, or of a memory, like that of the unevenness of two steps, or of the taste of the madeleine, the task was to interpret sensations *as signs* of so many laws and ideas, to try to think, that is, to bring what I had felt out of the shadows and to convert it into a spiritual equivalent."

"What I felt in my hours of love was no more than what all men feel. One does indeed feel, but what one feels is like a snapshot film that is a blank until it has been brought under a light and developed, and even then it must be seen in reverse: *you cannot tell what you have taken until you have submitted it to your intelligence.* Only then, when it has been lighted up, *intellectualized,* can you make out, and with what trouble, the pattern of what you have felt."[4]

We have made no secret of thinking that something was lacking to Proust's sensibility. We believe that this lack prevents Proust's classical success from being perfect. However, his evolution only brings out more clearly a tendency which his greatness obliged him to obey.

If the order of growth which we have traced and proposed is a true order, then several important consequences force themselves on our consideration.

First, if the classic state is the rare and yet normal achievement of experience in all fields, however complex the experience, however bewildering for an unprepared judgment, then a romantic reaction means that new

[4] Notice the strictly "classic" nature of Proust's intelligence. The "spiritual equivalent" of what one has felt is the result of a wholly Cartesian analysis.

variations of sensibility call for a recasting of judgment. A healthy and really alive classicism always, or almost always, presupposes a romantic movement. The one way to *become* really classic is to stick hard to the materials given us, no matter how opaque to the intelligence these materials may be. If this close-knit, organic solidarity shocks our received opinions, it is because we are used to seeing its deviations and sophisms isolated in order to make an antithesis of "romanticism" and "classicism." Romantic thought is not real thought, but a sentimental imitation or exercise of thought; pseudo-classical sensibility is nothing but an intellectual pretense of feeling. It is really no paradox to say that romanticism in its essence is a classic achievement. Since we hold that each classic form owes its particular sonority to the romantic metal in which it is cast, the academic mind may think our road to judgment a road to madness.

And then, since classicism varies with the nature and the conditions of judgment, and since judgment depends on the logic one adopts, our suppled reason of today, which has broken with experience, freed itself from fixed categories and their esthetic symbols, which respects irrationality, organizes each new layer of reality it casts its light upon, which has learned that in this mistrustful world it can make its principles respected only by bending to endless activity (like a commander who rules no longer by grace of God but because he has proven his capacities)—our reason will produce classic forms which will conform so closely to life that any of the exigencies of reason which might not accommodate themselves will be self-condemned. This does not mean that reason will give up the constant principles by virtue of which it is reason. "Classic," from our point of view, means eternal; and it is precisely in order to guard its rights

as an eternal thing that reason tries to take into account all circumstances. Moreover, when psychology has shown how preconceived ideas, whether true or false, influence the seemingly spontaneous motions of sensibility, then the old establishment of the "rules," should these rules still be alive, will be seen as a condition of freedom. The best of romanticism will not be made sterile by this; quite the contrary. Of all the "departures for the unknown," those whose goal can be foretold are not the least true, nor the least fertile.

And to conclude, classicism cannot rise from its ashes, as it once did, unless esthetic considerations cease to be separated from human considerations. The idea of the inhumanity of the work of art is one of the most uselessly false ones ever produced by debased romanticism in its reaction against genuine romanticism. For a fundamental aim of classicism is the translation into form of a state of full development, of balance, or, as Goethe said, of health.[5] No tragedy, no comedy, no wisdom is possible unless men are healthy, or becoming healthy, or are haunted by the mirage of health. What is there more essentially classic, in art or in life, than the reactions to our own time, than the quick interplay of thought, feeling, and action, than the unity of the person reflecting or achieving itself in the unity of the work, than exalted states of mind exaltedly expressed, than the progress of the man declaring itself through his work? The last surge of romanticism was too powerful, too deeply assimilated to be forgotten for a long time. But it needed thought; and today the artist, like all other dwellers in the city, should repeat the words of

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[5] By "health" I do not understand the golden mean of the spirit, but a participation, at least by sympathy, in those states of plenitude and perfect inner government that man's greatest monuments preserve for us.

that pure classicist, Spinoza: "Above all, as far as one can at the outset, one must find a way to cure the understanding and to purify it, so that it can get to know things with good result, without error, and as excellently as possible."

Dewitt H. Parker

The Problem of Æsthetic Form[1]

I

HAVING undertaken in the first chapter to offer a general theory or definition of art, I wish in the present chapter to study a single aspect of art—form or design. I have chosen this aspect for special study, partly because of its intrinsic interest, but chiefly because of its strategic importance for the understanding of the whole nature of art. And I have in mind to do two things: first, to unfold the general principles underlying design, and second, to inquire into the ground or reason for their existence. It is a remarkable fact, challenging to the curiosity of every student of art, that not only is design a universal characteristic of all art, but that its fundamental structure is the same everywhere. If, for illustration, you place alongside of each other the most diverse examples of the sculptor's art: works proceeding from antiquity and modernity; from the Orient and the Occident; of classical repose or baroque movement; realistic, romantic, or even cubistic; Egyptian, Hindu, Italian, French, German, American; different as they are, you will find them all alike in respect to their underlying design. Or if you choose a series of paintings or buildings or oriental carpets or musical compositions or poems; or even if you select

[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *The Analysis of Art* by Dewitt H. Parker. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926.

at random for comparison a statue, a painting, a poem, a sonata, a beautiful vase; the same observation would hold: all these so diverse works would be the same in form.

Of course, when I say that the form of all art is the same, I refer only to the most abstract aspects of form. For in sculpture, the form is a form of lines, planes, and volumes; in painting it is a form of colors and lines; in music, of tones; in poetry, of word-sounds. Hence, in each art the form is characteristically different; indeed, in every work of art it is unique. But I am not now concerned with the characteristic or unique quality of any species of form or of any individual form; I am interested only in the fact that despite the varieties of form, there is a common structure, law, or pattern in all æsthetic form. And this underlying pattern is something that one becomes aware of vaguely, as by mere feeling, before one has analyzed it and formulated it. So impressive is this fact of design that one cannot wonder at the tenacity of formalism in æsthetic theory—the doctrine that beauty is form, introduced by Plato twenty-five hundred years ago, and still maintained, for example, by Clive Bell.

Nevertheless, the conclusion of the formalist that æsthetic form is all that there is to beauty is unfounded. One might urge against the formalist what Plotinus urged,[2] that beauty is not absent from certain very simple things, like single colors or single sounds, where it is hard to find any form at all. The mere color of the blue sky, the mere fragrance of orchids, a single violin tone, is beautiful. Yet no formalist would be disconcerted by such an objection; for he would reply that he was not talking of beauty in some vague and

[2] Plotinus, *Ennead*, I. book 6.

general sense, but of the beauty of art; that one color cannot make a painting nor one sound a melody, but several can; and if they do, they will have exactly the character of which I am speaking, namely, æsthetic form. And I think we should have to admit the justice of the rejoinder; yet this admission does not prove the thesis of the formalist. For the works of art which the formalist cites as examples of pure design are more than that: melody is no mere abstract pattern or arabesque of sound, but a glowing experience of emotion as well; and even the pure color painting of the luminist, which seems to be merely a pattern of colors, is not pure pattern; for color, like sound, is a thrill of feeling. And although it is true that a still-life picture, imitative of quite indifferent objects—say one of Cézanne's—may be beautiful, that is because its mere colors and lines are appreciated by us as a static, inaudible music. Consider any work of art at your pleasure as an example of pure design, and a more careful consideration will show that it is an expression of feeling as well.

However, the chief reason why I believe that the formalist is wrong is a more profound one, which it will be the single purpose of this chapter to explain, illustrate, and justify. The reason is this: æsthetic form is not the sort of miraculous thing of which such people as Clive Bell speak with awe, but rather a fact related organically to the fundamental fact about art, namely, that art, like the dream, is a free creation of the imagination under the dominion of a wish. If this is true, if the same impulse that produces the content demands also its appropriate form, form and content are shown to be inseparable not only in fact but in origin. Croce, too, has insisted on the inseparability of form and content, yet they lie distinct in his theory; for the form

comes, we know not whence.[3] What, on the contrary, I wish to prove is that they both come from precisely the same source, from desire. Thus art would be shown to have a single and not, as Volkelt[4] believed, a multiple origin.

In order to prove this, we must first consider the general characteristics of æsthetic form. These I shall try to reduce to their simplest principles, hoping to provide the elements of what might be called a logic of æsthetic form. These principles are, I think, very few; as few, indeed, as six: the principle of organic unity, or unity in variety, as it has been called; the principle of the theme; the principle of thematic variation; balance; the principle of hierarchy; and evolution. I do not assert that there are no more principles, but I at least have been unable to find any of equal generality. Others that have been suggested can be shown either to be identical with the six mentioned or to be special cases of them. I shall consider each at some length.

First, the long established principle of organic unity. By this is meant the fact that each element in a work of art is necessary to its value, that it contains no elements that are not thus necessary, and that all that are needful are there. The beautiful object is organized all through, "baked all through like a cake." Since everything that is necessary is there, we are not led to go beyond it to seek something to complete it; and since there are no unnecessary elements, there is nothing present to disturb its value. Moreover, the value of the work as a whole depends upon the reciprocal relations of its elements: each needs, responds to, demands,

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[3] In the later, much truer but less original statement of his theory, in *La Pratica*, part I, section II, chap. 6, the matter comes from desire or aversion.

[4] Johannes Volkelt, *System der Ästhetik*, vol. I.

every other element. For example, in the Young Woman with a Water Jug (by Johannes Vermeer: Metropolitan Museum), the cool green needs the warm yellow and both need the red; the casement demands the table, the map requires the dark shadow under the casement, to balance it. In a melody, each tone requires its successor to continue the trend that is being established. In short, the meaning of the whole is not something additional to the elements of the work of art, but their coöperative deed.

This principle cannot, however, be described in so external a fashion. For the unity of a work of art is the counterpart of a unity within the experience of the beholder. Since the work of art becomes an embodiment not only of the imagination of the artist, but of the imagination of the spectator as well, his own experience is, for the moment, concentrated there. He is potentially as completely absorbed in it as he is in a dream; it is for the moment, in fact, his dream. And he can and does remain in the dream because the artist has so fashioned his work that everything there tends to continue and deepen it, and nothing to disturb and interrupt it. Art is the expression of the whole man, because it momentarily makes of man a whole. The 'isolation' of the æsthetic experience of Hugo Münsterberg[5] and the 'repose in the object' of Ethel Puffer[6] are descriptions of the fact to which I am calling attention. This does not mean, of course, that the work of art is not related to other things or that it is actually isolated; but only that its relations are irrelevant to its value, and that it cuts itself off from the rest of the world during appreciation; and this it does, first, because it embodies my dream and, second, because it is so constructed as to make me dream on. The marble of which the statue

[5] *The Eternal Values*, chap. IX.
[6] *The Psychology of Beauty*, chap. III.

is made comes from a certain quarry and has an interesting geological history there; it stands in a certain part of space, and hence is related to other parts of space; but all such facts are of no account to its beauty. By placing the statue on a pedestal, we indicate its isolation from the space of the room, as by putting a frame around a picture we isolate it, too, from everything else in the world. It is true that, in order to understand a work of art in its historical relations, I must connect it with the artist's personality, with other works of his, with the 'moral temperature' of the age, with the development of artistic styles, and the full appreciation of its beauty depends upon acquaintance with its spiritual background. Who, for example, can appreciate the whole meaning of Signorelli's Pan without some knowledge of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance? Yet at the moment of appreciation, all such knowledge becomes focused in the work of art, gathered and contained there like rays in a prism, and does not divert us from it.

The ancient law of organic unity is the master principle of æsthetic form; all the other principles serve it. First among them is what I would call the principle of the theme. This corresponds to the 'dominant character' or *idée mère* of Taine.[7] In every complex work of art there is some one (or there may be several) preëminent shape, color, line, melodic pattern or meaning, in which is concentrated the characteristic value of the whole. It contains the work of art in little; represents it; provides the key to our appreciation and understanding of it. Thus every good pattern is built up of one or more shapes, the disposition of which constitutes the design. When there is color as well as shape, there is some

[7] *Philosophie de l'art*, part I, p. 5.

dominant color that appears again and again or in related degrees of saturation, or else there is a color chord that is similarly repeated or is analyzed. In architecture, each style has its characteristic shape, line, or volume, as the pointed arch of the Gothic, the round arch of the Roman, the ellipse of the baroque. In music, there are the one or more themes that express the essential significance of each composition. Likewise, every sculptor, every draughtsman, has his unique and inimitable line. In every poem, there is a peculiar inflection and a regnant idea which constitute the basis of the design. In the drama or the novel, there is some one, or there may be several persons, whose character and fate create the plot.

The third principle is thematic variation. It is not sufficient to state the theme of a work of art; it must be elaborated and embroidered. One of the prominent ways of doing this is to make it echo and reëcho in our minds. Usually, if the theme can be repeated once only we are better pleased than with a single appearance. Yet to find the same thing barely repeated is monotonous; hence what we want is the same, to be sure, but the same with a difference: thematic variation. The simplest type of thematic variation is recurrence of the theme, as in any pattern built upon a repeat. Here is the maximum of sameness with the minimum of difference: mere difference of spatial or temporal position. A slight acquaintance with primitive art is sufficient to convince one of the overwhelming importance of recurrence there. Yet it is needless to say that recurrence is not confined to primitive art. We find it in all civilized art: the recurrence of the same shape and proportions in architecture and sculpture; the recurrence of the theme in music; the recurrence of the same type of foot in meter; repetition of the same color in painting;

recurrence of lines and directions of lines (parallelism) in painting and sculpture and architecture; the refrain in poetry; the reappearance of the hero in different scenes in the drama and novel. However, because of the monotony of mere repetition, recurrence gives place to what may be called, in a generalized sense, transposition of theme, as when a melody is transposed to another key or tempo; or when in a design the same shape appears in a different color, or a color appears in different degrees of saturation or brightness; or in architecture, where a shape occurs in different sizes or members—in doors, windows, gables, choir-stalls, and the like. Still another kind of thematic variation is alternation, which requires, of course, more than one theme, or at least two different transpositions of the same theme. Of this, again, the illustrations are legion. Finally, there is inversion of theme, as when melody is inverted or, in painting or sculpture, a curve is reversed. These are not all the possible types of thematic variation, but they are, I think, the most important and usual.

Another principle of æsthetic form is balance. Balance is equality of opposing or contrasting elements. Balance is one kind of æsthetic unity, for despite the opposition of the elements in balance, each needs the other and together they create a whole. Thus the blue demands the gold and the gold the blue, and together they make a new whole, gold-and-blue. Opposition or contrast is never absent from balance, for even in symmetry, where the balancing elements are alike, the directions of these elements are opposed, right and left. But contrast is never by itself æsthetically satisfactory, for the contrasting elements must offset each other, they must balance. In color, the warm offsets the cold; in a picture, the small object, properly placed, offsets the large one. Hence, just as only equal weights will bal-

ance in a scale pan, so only elements that are somehow equal in value, despite their opposition, will balance æsthetically. Not every tint of blue will balance every shade of yellow; that depth of blue must reappear in a corresponding depth of yellow; a light, superficial blue would never balance a deep yellow. But the identity of the opposites is even greater than this. For, as has been remarked, the elements of a balanced unity demand each other; the blue demands the yellow; the line which falls in one direction demands the line that falls in the opposite direction. Now the demand which the color or line makes for its opposite is itself a foreshadowing of the latter; in its demand it already contains the prophecy of its opposite. And even when, as may occur in painting, there is balance between elements of unlike quality—balance, say, of brightness of color against distance or size—the attention value of each must be the same, though opposed in direction. The essential thing about balance is equality of opposed values, however unlike be the things that embody or carry the values.

The pervasiveness of the principle of balance is too generally recognized to need much illustration or argument. In painting we expect, with a reservation that I shall consider in a moment, a threefold balance: horizontal, perpendicular, and radial or diagonal—between the right and left sides, the upper and lower portions, and between what may roughly be called the corners. This last has not received the attention which it deserves; but in many pictures, as for example, Tintoretto's Mercury and the Three Graces, the diagonal axis is the main axis; and in all cases of circular composition, radial balance is fundamental. In architecture, we find balance between right and left, and often between upper and lower parts. In music, there is not

seldom a balance between earlier and later parts of a composition, or between opposing themes. In sculpture, there is the balance characteristic of the human body made more perfect by the artist.

Pervasive as balance is, its universality has not stood unquestioned. Nevertheless, many apparent exceptions can be explained away, as is well known, as cases of disguised or subtle balance. The older interpretation of balance after the analogy of symmetry—the balance of like parts—is only a special kind of balance, and has to be supplemented by the wider conception of balance of unlike parts.[8] With this richer conception in mind, we can understand the balance—as in Bruegel's Harvesters—between prominent objects in the right-hand part and little except a vista on the left. Similarly, there is a balance—as in the same picture—between the upper and lower halves of a painting, even when the horizon line is high, and the upper part seems therefore to be relatively empty of masses; for the distance values in the sky balance the heavier lower part. No more difficult of explanation are some cases where asymmetry appears to be definitely sought, as when a girl will put a patch on one cheek but not on another, or will tie the lock of hair on the right with a ribbon, but not the lock on the left. For the piquancy of this procedure comes from the fact that there is a background of decisive symmetry, against which the asymmetrical element stands out. This is quite different from absolute lack of balance. One finds similar eccentric elements in all complex patterns; but always with a background of emphatic balance. And if it is true that such elements disturb symmetry, it is equally true that they serve to emphasize it. The triangle of pas-

[8] Compare Ethel Puffer, "Studies in Symmetry," *Harvard Psychological Studies*, vol. I, 1902.

sion is another illustration; for there also a balanced relationship is the background against which the unbalanced derives its interest.

There are, however, more difficult cases to consider. Many works of art, of the temporal arts in particular, are superficially considered rhythmical rather than balanced, and rhythm may seem to be opposed to balance. Yet an analysis of rhythm shows it to be built upon the two fundamental æsthetic forms, thematic repetition and balance. For what are the typical characteristics of rhythm? Every rhythm is a motion of waves, all of a relatively constant or lawfully varying shape and temporal and spatial span, with balancing crests and troughs. The crest may be an accent or the swing up of a line; the trough may be one or more unaccented syllables, a pause, or the swing back of a line in the opposite direction. The rhythm may begin with the trough, as in iambic meter. The swing up and the swing back may both be very complex, as in free verse, yet the fundamental pattern, as it has just been described, is maintained: in every case there is the recurrence of a certain type of wave form, and the opposition—and balance—between the rising and falling swings. The simplest repeat, if you take its elements in succession, is a rhythm. In the diaper pattern, for example, there is the recurrence of the rising and falling lines, and their opposition and balance, two by two. Or a colonnade, as you apprehend the columns in succession, is a rhythm of identical and balancing filled and empty spaces, the columns corresponding to the arsis, and the spatial interval to the thesis.

Hence when balance seems to be replaced by rhythm, balance is still present, only it is not the simple type of balance so easily recognized, but balance as an element in the complex structure we call rhythm. This

more subtle type of balance exists oftentimes in pictorial composition—in 'open' as opposed to 'closed' forms —where the ordinary mode of balance is rejected. I remember one of Monet's Lily Ponds, in which I searched vainly for the usual type of balance with reference to some axis, only to find that the elements of the picture were arranged in a clear-cut rhythm. Rhythm often replaces right-and-left balance in wall paintings, as in those of Puvis de Chavannes. In the Metropolitan Museum he has two paintings, both decorative sketches, which illustrate this: Inter Artes et Naturam and The River. In the former, notice how we do not view the picture from a vertical central axis, but rather from left or right, taking each group of figures in turn as an element in a rhythmically disposed sequence of filled and empty spaces. In The River, the rhythmical arrangement is in deep space.

Another and last type of unity I call evolution. By this I mean the unity of a process when the earlier parts determine the later, and all together create a total meaning. For illustrations, one naturally turns first to the temporal arts. The course of a well-fashioned story is a good example, for each incident determines its follower and all the incidents determine the destiny of the characters involved. The drama offers similar illustrations: the form is the same, only transposed to theatrical presentation. In the older, orthodox story or play there were three stages in the development, an initial one of introduction of characters, a second stage of complication, ending in the climax, and then the unraveling. But these stages may be compressed. The story may begin with the complication already there; the play may begin with the climax and proceed to the unraveling, and go back, as in Ibsen, to the preparation. But in every case, there is a necessary relation between

means and consequences, causes and effects, and a total resulting meaning. Illustrations of this type of unity abound also in the static arts. Any line which we appreciate as having a beginning, middle, and end, and any composition of figures where we are led on from one figure or group of figures to another, is an illustration; for there, too, although the figures be physically static, our appreciation of them is a process in time, and through the process the meaning of the whole is evolved. Of all painters, I think El Greco offers the best illustrations of evolution, as in the Crucifixion (Prado museum), where we follow an intensely dramatic movement from the lower to the upper part of the picture.

Is evolution a genuinely distinct type of æsthetic unity? Can it be reduced to one or more of the preceding forms? The most closely allied form is rhythm; yet that evolution is distinct from rhythm can easily be seen. For in rhythm, unless combined with evolution, there is no obvious development, no tendency toward a goal. Rhythm is recurrence and balance of systole and diastole, with no growth from one phase to another. It is true that we sometimes speak of any movement of growth as a rhythm, as when we talk of the rhythm of life, but in such cases rhythm exists in combination with evolution. For there is, of course, a rhythm in all life—birth and death, sleep and waking, activity and repose. And if life be taken generically or historically, there are other equally well-known rhythms, as in the history of art, with the alternation of the opposed directions from realism to romanticism. In melody also, except in the most eccentric types of music, harmonic evolution is joined with an accentual or time rhythm. Moreover, even in the most mechanical types of rhythm, like the simple repeat, provided they be æsthetic, there is some felt growth of value through the recurrence and

balance of parts, and some, however slight looking forward to the end term as a goal. Only in purely natural rhythms, as of the tides, is there no growth at all, but these, unless they enter into the mind and emotion of man, are not æsthetic in character. Nevertheless, although there is always some evolution in every æsthetic rhythm, evolution is not itself necessarily rhythmical. In literature, the rhythm of prose and poetry overlies a development of meanings which does not itself have the quasi-mechanical character of rhythm; the rhythm of time and accent is united with the melodic development of the musical theme, but does not constitute it. The essential character of evolution is, as Bergson has shown, growth or accumulation of meaning, which need not be rhythmical.

Two different types of evolutionary unity must be discriminated, the dramatic and the non-dramatic. In the dramatic type there is an element of overshadowing importance, the climax or goal; in the other type, this element is lacking. To be sure, every process must have an end, and the end has a distinctive importance as such, but it is not always true that the end has a greater importance than some other element or elements. The consummation of the meaning may occur through the agency of all parts evenly, rather than through a particular one. Many stories are of this character; there is an unfolding, a working out of something, with no obvious high points. Here and there the meaning rises, but there is no place where it becomes so central that we feel that the whole story depends upon it. And, if I mistake not, there is much music of this character; there is a definite drift or unfolding, but no climax or finale.

Closeness of connection, yet ultimate difference, marks

the relation between evolution and the other types of æsthetic unity, balance and thematic variation. The static character of balance is opposed to the dynamic character of evolution; indeed, all movement depends upon the upsetting of an established equilibrium. Yet seldom, even in the static arts, is balance found without movement; for there exists a tendency to proceed from one to another of the balanced elements. In a simple color contrast, for example, there is ever so slight a movement from the cold to the warm color. And, on the other hand, there is often a balance within evolution, between the complication and the unraveling of the plot, or the earlier and later parts of a musical theme. But the union of evolution and balance does not militate against the uniqueness of either. There remains for comparison, thematic variation. This form, too, might seem at first sight to be opposed to evolution, yet not so, for there is probably no case of variation in which the evolutionary element is not present. For the series of variations is not fruitless; each contributes something to a meaning which accumulates and is complete when the variations are over. So many, and no more, exist as are necessary to this end. In so far as, in this way, a meaning is worked out, evolution and thematic variation approach and meet. Yet a difference remains. For the mode of the creation of the meaning is different. In the one case, it occurs through the recurrence of the central meaning in new shapes; in the other, through the realization of some single dominant idea, which extends over the entire work and is expressed once and once only. In the one case, we start with an idea already given, and work it out by repetition; in the other, we have no definite, but only a very vague idea to start with, and construct it step by step. The one method

may be called analytic, the other synthetic. For example, we do not know what a musical theme is like until we have heard it entire; building it up is one thing; then, having got it, it is another thing to modulate, invert, and vary it. The same is true of a line.

Nevertheless, in the construction of a theme, both thematic variation and balance may be employed. For example, in building a melody, we may proceed from tone to tone consonant with a given tone, thus repeating the fundamental psychophysical rhythm of the two tones which is the basis of their harmony; or we may proceed through opposition by introducing dissonances. Again, in constructing a linear theme, it is possible to proceed either by repeating or continuing the curve with which we start, or else by introducing opposing and balancing lines. Or for the elucidation of a story it may be expedient to place the persons in various situations, in order that they may manifest their characters—the method of thematic variation—or to balance them against unlike characters. Yet by themselves neither mere variation of theme nor balance of opposites will create evolution. Thematic variation, balance, and evolution remain, therefore, the fundamental and irreducible types of æsthetic unity. I personally have been unable to find other types. Types which seem to be different, like rhythm or circular composition, can easily be shown to be species of one or another of these preëminent forms. The reduction of rhythm has already been effected. As for circular composition, it is evidently a case of evolution; for there is always a beginning and an end; but evolution is combined with repetition, for the beginning and the end are the same. A melody that begins and ends on the tonic is a simple illustration. I have shown that all three forms are intermingled; and most works

of art contain all three; yet they remain, nevertheless, distinct.[9]

The principle of hierarchy is not so much a mode of organic unity, like thematic variation, balance, and evolution, as rather a species of organization of elements in each of these modes. Sometimes, although not always, there is some one element, or there may be more, of a complex work of art which occupies a position of commanding importance there. These elements always embody the theme in an emphatic way, and have a significance far greater than any of the other elements. Thus, in a portrait, the figure is more important than the background, and the face is more significant than anything else. In a novel or drama there may be a scene of unusual significance for the development of the plot, or in a musical composition a single passage, like the Liebestod in Tristan, which overshadows the remainder of the composition or is the climax of its movement. Every dramatic species of evolution illustrates this, as we have seen. In balance also, as again we have already observed, one or the other of the elements may dominate, though slightly. However, dominance is a relative matter, and an element, not itself of unusual importance in the whole, may nevertheless overshadow another element, relatively. Thus, in the Young Woman with a Water Jug, the pitcher is more prominent than the box. Any quality whatever—large size, unusual brightness, richness of elaboration, central position, fullness of meaning—that attracts the attention to itself more strongly than the attention is attracted to other elements, creates relative dominance. However, there may be no elements of outstanding impor-

[9] I am reminded by my friend, Miss Shio Sakanishi, that in many forms of Japanese art symmetry and repetition are carefully avoided, yet balance is scrupulously observed.

tance in the whole, as is the case in many a landscape painting and in the non-dramatic types of evolution, but only varying degrees of importance among all the elements.

What is the explanation of æsthetic design? The hypothesis which I shall present is closely connected, as I have indicated, with the general theory of art which I accept. A work of art—such has been the thesis—is the imaginative embodiment of a wish, expressed in a sensuous shape, through which both imagination and the wish acquire clarity, objectivity, and communicability. Or to put the same thing in a different way, a work of art is a reconstruction of sensuous reality into an image of desire. Art is expression, a language, but what it expresses is a dream. Now what I hope to show is that æsthetic form is precisely the form which a thing should have if it is to be in fact the imaginative satisfaction of desire. If the content of a work of art is the symbol of a wish, so is the form. Æsthetic form is desirable form. This form is, moreover, not peculiar to art, but is, as Plato divined, merely the perfection of that form which all experience has when it is happiest.

In a world which fulfilled my wish everything would be as I wanted it to be in terms of the wish. Everything would be both means and end; means as furthering satisfaction, and end as the material or terminus of satisfaction. Not only the eventual meanings, but the present qualities of my world would satisfy me. And such a world would contain no elements that were not expressions of desire. For obviously if any such elements existed, they would disturb the completeness of my satisfaction. They would either hinder or divert me from my purpose. They might satisfy some rival interest, but in so far as they did, my original purpose would be impaired. It might be necessary for satis-

faction that there be obstacles to desire, to give it zest, but at least there would not be irrelevance or rivalry of interest. The wish would still command and pervade every element. For the achievement of this end, two conditions are necessary: first, the utter plasticity of the materials, and, second, the isolation of the experience in which the wish is fulfilled. These conditions are perfectly realized only in the dream and in those voluntary constructions of the imagination which, embodying dreams, we call works of art. The materials of the dream are images, things freed from the laws and conditions of reality, perfectly plastic to the dreamer's desires. The restrictions of time, place, and matter are removed; everything can be as the dreamer wishes it to be—in his dream. Wrapt in himself, nothing from the outside world can enter to disturb him, no duties, no demands. It is true that as he sleeps lightly sensations may now and then reach the sleeper, but they do not disturb or divert; for they are quickly woven into the fabric of his dream. In the day-dream also the same conditions obtain. The rigid attitude of body and absent-minded expression of face indicate the isolation of the dreamer from the rest of reality and his absorption in the dream.

It is clear that the conditions of complete wish fulfilment as we have described them are the exact counterpart of the principle of organic unity. The inference is unavoidable that the principle itself is a derivative of the wish. It was only gradually, however, that the full implications of this principle were worked out. At first it was applied to the meanings or content of the work of art only. When paleolithic man first drew the image of the bison or reindeer in his cave, he was creating a rudimentary work of art, an image of his desire. Those red or black marks meant the animal, the

possession of which he so urgently needed. But it was only the animal that he was interested in—and he drew it with a poignant and consummate realism; he was not interested in the black or red marks themselves. Yet they, too, were his own work and subject potentially to his will. And eventually they claimed his attention. Gradually, we notice an interest in the colors or lines as such. The colors become pleasing and expressive; so too the lines; the wish has mastered the medium also. So that now we scarcely regard anything as a work of art unless it has this character of complete expressiveness. And where the form is most plastic to desire, there we agree that a work of art is most artistic, most nearly art—as with music and painting and sculpture, and occasionally with poetry (for language is rarely utterly responsive, even to a poet's will); and less often with architecture and the other industrial arts. The fineness of art depends upon this.

In passing from imagination to reality the conditions of perfect wish fulfilment are only partially satisfied; and therefore the principle of organic unity is only approximately realized; yet it is important to observe that there is partial fulfilment. The nearest approaches to the perfect realization of the wish are the so-called beauties of nature and machines. There is something seemingly miraculous about the former, for they come to man, without any effort of his own, already embodiments of his wish. It is as if some purpose were at work there favorable to man, moulding the aspect of things in accordance with his heart's desire. Thus to a man a woman is given, not created, beautiful—the visible expression of his amorous dream for play, for companionship, for comfort. She is just as he would have her be, as if he himself had designed and created her, and in contemplation of her his instincts find a rapt

and total imaginative fulfilment. Yet ever not quite. There is always some detail that does not go with the rest, some element of structure or line or color. When he paints her or sculptures her, he will change something. So a sunset on a summer's sea, or a moonrise over dark hills, without any effort of his own, will cause him to dream, and keep him in his dream, and thus will be beautiful. But to his critical eye there will be something there also, too much or too little, something to add or something to exclude (hence the artistic superiority of still life over nature), unless through some stupendous vision, like the Grand Cañon of Arizona, he is overwhelmed and his power of criticism shattered.

For any one who has used or known of the use of a machine, it too expresses a wish. There, too, as in a work of art, we observe the coöperation of parts to a single end; there, also, nothing is superfluous and everything needful is provided. Moreover, despite the fact that, in order to be used, a machine must be placed in contact with the object upon which it is to function—as a reaper must be placed in contact with the sheaves—its efficient working depends upon a certain isolation and enclosure of energies within a limited field. In all these respects, a machine is analogous to a work of art; but there are fatal defects from the point of view of the imagination. For, in the first place, the wish is never fulfilled in the machine itself as an object to be contemplated, as the wish is satisfied with art, but only through the use of the machine. To be sure, if well fashioned, a machine offers to the imagination a prophecy and premonition of the values in use, which is itself a delight, but, after all, its purpose is not realized except in actual use. And in use, every machine reveals itself as imperfect and inefficient, magnificently functioning for a time, but soon needing repair and

eventually out-of-date, and superseded—never a joy forever. Moreover, although a machine may be relatively good from a practical point of view, certain of its aspects need not be just as one would wish them to be. The lines, for example, although as bearers of mechanical energies they be precisely what we should want them to be in terms of the purpose of the machine, are not necessarily pleasing in themselves. Neither are the colors. Mechanically considered, the lines of a Ford car may be right, but as mere lines they are not. A machine, therefore, although it approximates organization in terms of a wish, is not organized all through; it may satisfy the user, but it does not always satisfy the spectator.

It is thus through the whole of a man's practical world. He is forever striving to reconstruct his environment in terms of his wishes; he succeeds here, he fails there, but never does he win a complete success. In his office he tries to arrange everything—chairs, table, desk, filing case, the routine of his business—so that each item will express his desire, so that nothing shall interfere or divert; but these things, although they may be partly, are never wholly, as he would have them. He comes home; he seeks there an environment that shall express his more intimate, affectionate, playful self; and if fortunate, he will find much that will satisfy, but never all.

To restate my argument. The organic structure of works of art is not unique—except in its perfection. For in his relations with his world, a man is trying to do exactly what the artist does—to transform it into an image of his desire. And he would so transform it all through; he would make it utterly his, the embodiment of his dream. But however skilful and fortunate, he cannot succeed. The materials with which he works are not sufficiently plastic to his purpose; he has to rely

on other wills which offer him only partial service and coöperation; his own will is faltering and unclear. Some things there are that come to him already satisfactory, for the most part—his own and other organisms, where a will sympathetic with and similar to his own seems to be operative,[10] and institutions which are themselves partially products of desire; yet even these, as we have seen, are imperfect. There remains a realm where man can succeed, the realm of the imagination, dream, play, and art. There he can do perfectly, because there and there alone he is master and creator.

The next two principles, those of the theme and of thematic variation, can well be considered together. The explanation is contained, I think, in the following reflections.

The growth of experience is marked by the gradual emergence of clarity and definiteness, the passage of the mind from vague, diffuse interests to consolidate habits. On the reflective level, these habits become plans of action and expectations of recurrent kinds of satisfaction. Types of activity and value are distinguished: business, recreation, home life, love, study, and the like. And these types are not mere classifications of unrelated experiences that happen to be alike, but highly systematic wholes. In time, as man becomes fully self-conscious, he interprets his life in terms of them. This fact could be accurately expressed by saying that, as experience develops into ripeness, it knows itself as the working out of a number of definitely conceived 'themes,' which recur again and again, are embroidered and varied, like the themes of an arabesque or a musical composition. And, as in music, experience tends, following its own law, to an increasing subordination of its elements to

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[10] Compare the argument of Kant's *Kritik of Judgment*, part II.

the major themes, few or many, upon which it is built. In proportion as it is masterful, these themes become clear and dominating. Yet in real life they never do become quite clear and dominating; man retains to the end, even when most powerful and self-conscious, a certain vagueness and shiftiness. He does not know just what his purposes are; he does not know just what to expect and plan for; but he always wishes that he did.

Now in art what I have called the principle of the theme is, I believe, the realization of precisely this wish. In the imagination, life can have the clarity and consistency which it seeks, but never quite finds. There it can state its plans, its expectations, its purposes. The theme is such a statement. Knowing a linear or coloristic or musical theme is like knowing a friend's character or plans, or like knowing one's own mind: you know what to expect; you know what the characteristic quality of your experience will be; and that everything will be composed with reference to this quality as a focus. The theme will contain the central meaning of the whole and will serve as the summary and essence of it. Knowing it, you can largely divine and understand the rest. Thus the theme is no new thing; it is not anything peculiar to art. It is the theme which gives to life, as well as to art, what we call style, distinctive pattern, and clarity. Once more we find that æsthetic form is the form of all satisfactory life, only a form perfectly realized because embodied in a material of indefinitely great plasticity.

Important as the theme is in life, no less important is the variation of it. In order that life be satisfactory, it is necessary that a valuable activity be both constantly repeated and constantly varied. Few wishes can be satisfied with a single, instant fulfilment. At the first exercise of an activity the organs are not fully prepared;

adaptation comes only by repetition. As I can better attend to a thing when—*ceteris paribus*—I have attended to it before, so I can the better enjoy what I have before enjoyed. Moreover, every valuable experience leaves a delightful memory of itself which becomes a wish for its renewal. When therefore the new experience comes, it comes not merely as a fulfilment of the desire itself, but of the expectation of it, also; it thus acquires a double value. The basis of life's happiness is the recurrence of habitual, expected satisfactions. And yet, although repetition increases value, mere repetition kills it. Too great habituation brings mechanism and the loss of conscious interest. Hence the need for change, for variation, to pique the value into vividness.

Throughout life we demand the type, the theme, yet some variation from it.

I can illustrate the need for each as follows. Let us suppose that our friends had new faces each day, how disconcerting! We should have the trouble of getting acquainted with them anew each morning, and there would be no opportunity for the sweet joy of recognition, no anchor for affection. They could not grow in meaning for us, as they do now. Suppose, on the other hand, that our friends' faces were invariable, that they were worn like masks. Once more, how disconcerting! How monotonous, how unresponsive! Our values are best attached to familiar objects which at the same time offer us the spice of novelty. Through the typical, value receives perfectly adjusted realization; through its variation, intensity. "The union of the hazardous and the stable," writes John Dewey, "of the incomplete and the recurrent, is the condition of all experienced satisfaction as truly as of our predicaments and problems. While it is the source of ignorance, error, and the failure of expectation, it is the source of the delights which ful-

filment brings. For if there were nothing in the way, if there were no deviations and resistances, fulfilment would be at once and in so being would fulfil nothing, but merely be. It would not be in connection with desire and satisfaction."[11] Such familiar considerations as these suffice, I think, to show that the principle of thematic variation belongs to life as well as to art.

That the demand for balance in art has its analogue in life and that this demand springs from the emotional side of our nature, I shall now proceed to show. Balance depends upon contrast, as we have seen. One might think perhaps that contrast was opposed to the conditions underlying wish fulfilment as expounded so far; for, as we have observed it, the wish demands renewal, repetition of the like, while now we suggest that it demands the unlike. And yet it remains a fact that a wish requires both: both sameness and difference, and that extreme of difference which is contrast. There are several reasons for this. First, as has often been suggested, the contrasting thing, being totally unlike the original, occupies a different set of elements of the mind from those which are brought into play by the former, and thus offers them rest; when therefore the original object reappears, it comes with its value refreshed and enhanced. Each contrasting element therefore increases the value of the other. But this would explain only the value of alternating opposites; it would not explain simultaneous contrast. Hence there must be another reason, a reason far more fundamental, I think.

That reason is this: our entire emotional life is constructed on the principle of polarity: stimulation, repose; joy, sadness; love, hate; tension, relaxation. Not only is the organism bilaterally symmetrical and the

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[11] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 62.

muscles built in pairs of balancing antagonists; the inner life has a similar plan. Furthermore, each polar element *demands* its antagonist; it contains within itself already a desire and a premonition of its opposite. Joy contains an impulse to sorrow, and vice versa; hate to love; love to hate. Strange as this fact may seem, it is nevertheless a commonplace among acute observers of human nature. The most striking illustrations of it are to be found among pathological phenomena, but the pathological are only exaggerations, caricatures of the normal. Things which express opposing states of mind come, therefore, not only with their own native values, but with values enhanced through the fulfilment of demands which their very opposites have created. The blue demands the gold; the high tone, the low tone; the curve to the right, a curve to the left; light, darkness; because each of these pairs possesses an emotional significance which craves its opposite. This same principle may be stated in still another form, which is the most fundamental of all: man's entire nature demands expression; this is better fulfilled through contrast, which brings opposing elements into play, than through the mere variation of a single identical theme. A palette of warm colors contains only half a world of color values; a palette that contains also the cold holds the entire world of color value in its compass. Hence the richest works of art are constructed through the variation and embellishment of opposed, yet balanced themes.[12] This principle is of the greatest value in explaining the presence of evil and pain in art; for in the long run man prefers a world in which there is the night side as well as the daylight side of life.

Next we have to prove that the evolutionary type of

[12] This concept of totality through balance of opposites was Goethe's. See E. A. Boucke, *Goethe's Weltanschauung*, p. 263.

unity exemplified in works of art is present in the structure of satisfactory life everywhere. Now, independent of the special character of its incidents, the course of life is interesting when, first, there is some major plan or expectation which is worked out through its entire span. The existence of an ambition, purpose, or expectation, as giving meaning and interest to life, would illustrate this. This demand is fulfilled in art through the theme, as we have observed. However, zest in life depends, second, upon the realization of the expectation in such a way that curiosity as to how and when it is to be fulfilled is constantly aroused and satisfied, satisfied and aroused, from moment to moment. A life in which expectation is fulfilled too easily, in which therefore suspense and curiosity are lacking, is boring; on the other hand, a life in which expectation was always balked, a life therefore which was so uncertain that no expectations could arise, would be intolerable. That both these conditions are fulfilled, and in the best possible fashion, in the æsthetic structure which we have called evolution, can be proved by the analysis of one or two concrete examples.

What happens when we listen to a story? It is a fact—is it not?—that, knowing the general plan of human life, there are created in us, through the characters and situations presented to us, certain expectations from point to point in the story which at later points are fulfilled or denied. At the outset our expectations are very general indeed; we know that we are to hear something about human life; hence there will be men and women in the story, and something of love and ambition, with the successful or unsuccessful issue of each. But when the story has fairly opened and the characters and their situation are before us, our expectations become more definite. They do not, how-

ever, take us far; they do not enable us to predict the outcome of the story with certainty. They carry us only to the next events, and then only to their general character. Thus, in Chekov's story, *Expensive Lessons*, as soon as the teacher of French enters the scholar's room we know he will fall in love with her, but we are in doubt as to what will be her feeling toward him. At each step in the story a double attitude of mind, part curiosity, part expectation, is created in us, and every time that our curiosity is satisfied, a new curiosity is aroused; every time our expectations are fulfilled, a surprise awaits us. A story that defeated all of our expectations would have no unity; one that allowed us to foretell everything and so aroused no curiosity and suspense, would not interest us. And when our expectations are disappointed, it should seem right—that is, logical—on retrospect, that events should have happened as they did; the story should seem right and we wrong; everything in the story should appear to be necessary, as we review it. In this respect also art should be the image of life, only more perspicuous than life; for as we live forward, looking to an unknown future, events occur which seem at the moment to be fortuitous, and we protest against them as things that might have been otherwise; yet when they are past and we review them in the light of our own natures, which are our fates, and in relation to our history hitherto, we see that they could not have happened otherwise than as they did.

An analysis of melody reveals a similar psychological tissue. As we set ourselves in the attitude of listening, we have certain very vague expectations as to what we shall hear; it will be music, of course, and in a certain key and from a certain instrument. But our expectations become definite only after we have heard the first few tones. The succeeding tones must lie within the

tonality of the melody; they must belong to the principal chords of the key. Yet we cannot predict beforehand just what is coming; we are curious to see. Sometimes, as when a dissonance is introduced, our expectations are defeated and we are surprised. But on the resolution of the dissonance, it comes to seem to have been right, in retrospect; and so does every other tone. Step by step there are built up expectations and curiosities which the music satisfies and arouses as it proceeds.[13]

But this account is still not quite adequate. For in emphasizing the step by step character of the development, we have failed to do justice to the dominating unity of the whole. This is very apparent when there is a climax. For in that case it is clear that there is aroused a major expectation and curiosity that pervades the entire story, with reference to which other expectations are as smaller designs in a larger pattern. But the same thing holds when there is no over-shadowing element. There is still some main problem that has to be solved, some knot that has to be untied. The facts are the same in melody; the melody arouses a single sweeping wave of expectation which is satisfied when the return to the tonic or to some other tone of the tonic chord is effected, even when its course is even. In rhythm, as opposed to evolution, there is a sequence of expectations and fulfilments; but unless the rhythm is part of an evolution, there is no embracing one. There, there is a series of pulsations, all on a level; here, there is a single one, made up of partial ones. In rhythm there is, moreover, a regularity in the pulsations and a balance among them, two by two, while in evolu-

[13] This analysis applies only to classical music. 'Modernist' music is at the point of dispensing with scales and tonality altogether.

tion, although there may be a regular or irregular ground-rhythm, the minor pulsations are not necessarily balanced. The facts noted here correspond to the differences between rhythm and evolution already recorded. Yet in the dramatic type of evolution, there is probably, as Langfeld has observed,[14] a balance between the strain of complication and the relief of unraveling.

That, finally, the principle of hierarchy has its analogue in life and its basis in human nature, is not difficult to see. The concerns of life fall naturally into focus and fringe, vocation and avocation, important and less important. Matters of high interest are salient against a background of things of less moment. There is never a dead level of value in life. No life is satisfactory without its hours of intense significance, which give it luster, yet man cannot always 'burn with a gemlike flame'; he must fall back, for rest and refreshment, on the little things. These latter are just as necessary in their way as the great moments. Some of them function as recreation, others as a stage or preparation for the high moments. Yet when life is most satisfactory, these moments of preparation or repose are never merely means to ends; they possess charm of their own as well. When life is so lived it becomes an art, and when a work of art is so constructed, it is an image of life at its best.

What I have tried to prove in this chapter may be summarized briefly as follows: Æsthetic design is the perfect realization of that design which gives value to experience everywhere. When experience is organic, when it has clarity of aim, when that aim finds itself fulfilled in ever new experiences; when the opposing elements of our complex nature receive a balanced

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[14] Sidney Langfeld, *The Æsthetic Attitude*, p. 241.

realization; when the career of life has plot, embodying suspense and fulfilment, curiosity and expectation; when there is due subordination of its elements to its major interests, yet some value in each on its own account as well; then experience is satisfactory, then it has desirable form. It was inevitable, therefore, that man in his effort to embody his dreams in permanent shape, and make them available for the appreciation of his fellows, should give to them this same form. The design of art, like its content, is the image of desire.

T. S. Eliot

Tradition and the Individual Talent[1]

I

IN English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to "the tradition" or to "a tradition"; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-so is "traditional" or even "too traditional." Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archæological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archæology.

Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are "more

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[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *The Sacred Wood*, by T. S. Eliot, second edition, London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1928.

critical" than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without his prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a

perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of æsthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is

aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

In a peculiar sense he will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past. I say judged, not amputated, by them; not judged to be as good as, or worse or better than, the dead; and certainly not judged by the canons of dead critics. It is a judgment, a comparison, in which two things are measured by each other. To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value—a test, it is true, which can only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity. We say: it appears to conform, and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and may conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other.

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which

changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route,* which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent which we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Some one said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did." Precisely, and they are that which we know.

I am alive to a usual objection to what is clearly part of my programme for the *métier* of poetry. The objection is that the doctrine requires a ridiculous amount of erudition (pedantry), a claim which can be rejected by appeal to the lives of poets in any pantheon. It will even be affirmed that much learning deadens or perverts poetic sensibility. While, however, we persist in believing that a poet ought to know as much as will not encroach upon his necessary receptivity and necessary laziness, it is not desirable to confine knowledge to whatever can be put into a useful shape for examinations, drawing-rooms, or the still more pretentious modes of publicity. Some can absorb knowledge, the more tardy must sweat for it. Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum. What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should con-

tinue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.

What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I shall, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.

II

Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the susurrus of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great numbers; if we seek not Blue-book knowledge but the enjoyment of poetry, and ask for a poem, we shall seldom find it. In the last article I tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this Impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of "personality," not being necessarily more interesting, or having "more to say," but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The analogy was that of the catalyst. When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely. Canto XV of the *Inferno* (Brunetto Latini) is a working up of the emotion evident in the situation; but the effect, though single as that of any work of art, is obtained by considerable complexity of detail. The last quatrain gives an image, a feeling attaching to an image, which "came," which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet's mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to. The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases,

images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of "sublimity" misses the mark. For it is not the "greatness," the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore, than Canto XXVI, the voyage of Ulysses, which has not the direct dependence upon an emotion. Great variety is possible in the process of transmution of emotion: the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently closer to a possible original than the scenes from Dante. In the *Agamemnon,* the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in *Othello* to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that

the poet has, not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.

I will quote a passage which is unfamiliar enough to be regarded with fresh attention in the light—or darkness—of these observations:

> And now methinks I could e'en chide myself
> For doating on her beauty, though her death
> Shall be revenged after no common action.
> Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
> For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
> Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
> For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?
> Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
> And put his life between the judge's lips,
> To refine such a thing—keeps horse and men
> To beat their valours for her? . . .

In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context) there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.

It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express; and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all. And emotions which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him. Consequently, we must believe that "emotion recollected in tranquillity" is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not "recollected," and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is "tranquil" only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him "personal." Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those

who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

III

ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἴσως θειότερόν τι καὶ ἀπαθές ἐστιν

This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions as can be applied by the responsible person interested in poetry. To divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim; for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad. There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.

Oswald Spengler

The Arts of Form[1]

I

THE clearest type of symbolic expression that the world-feeling of higher mankind has found for itself is (if we except the mathematical-scientific domain of presentation and the symbolism of its basic ideas) that of the arts of form,[2] of which the number is legion. *And with these arts we count music* in its many and very dissimilar kinds; had these been brought within the domain of art-historical research instead of being put in a class apart from that of the pictorial-plastic arts, we should have progressed very much further in our understanding of the import of this evolution towards an end. For the formative impulse that is at work in the *wordless*[3] arts can never be under-

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[1] Reprinted from Oswald Spengler: *The Decline of the West*, vol. I, Form & Actuality (translated by C. F. Atkinson). Copyright, 1926, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

[2] *Die bildenden Künste.* The expression is a standard one in German, but unfamiliar in English. Ordinarily, however, "die bildenden Künste" (shaping arts, arts of form) are contrasted with "die redenden Künste" (speaking arts)—music, as giving utterance rather than spatial form to things, being counted among the latter.—*Tr.*

[3] As soon as the word, which is a transmission-agent of the understanding, comes to be used as the expression-agent of an art, the waking consciousness ceases to express or to take in a thing integrally. Not to mention the *read* word of higher Cultures—the medium of literature proper—even the spoken word, when used in any artificial sense, separates hearing from understanding, for the ordinary meaning of the word also takes a hand in the process and, as this art grows in power, the word-

stood until we come to regard the distinction between optical and acoustic means as only a superficial one. To talk of the art of the eye and the art of the ear takes us no further. It is not such things that divide one art from another. Only the 19th Century could so over-estimate the influence of *physiological* conditions as to apply it to expression, conception or communion. A "singing" picture of Claude Lorrain or of Watteau does not really address itself to the bodily eye any more than the space-straining music since Bach addresses itself to the bodily ear. The Classical relation between art-work and sense-organ—of which we so often and so erroneously remind ourselves here—is something quite different from, something far simpler and more material than ours. We *read* "Othello" and "Faust" and we study orchestral scores—that is, we change one sense-agency for another in order to let the undiluted spirit of these works take effect upon us. Here there is always an appeal from the outer senses to the "inner," to the truly Faustian and wholly un-Classical power of imagination. Only thus can we understand Shakespeare's ceaseless change of scene as against the Classical unity of place. In extreme cases indeed, for instance in that of "Faust" itself, no representation of the work (that is, of its full content) is physically pos-

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less arts themselves arrive at expression-methods in which the motives are joined to word-meanings. Thus arises the *Allegory*, or motive that *signifies a word*, as in Baroque sculpture after Bernini. So, too, painting very often develops into a sort of painting-writing, as in Byzantium after the second Nicene Council (787) which took from the artist his freedom of choice and arrangement. This also is what distinguishes the arias of Gluck, in which the melody grew up out of the meaning of the libretto, from those of Alessandro Scarlatti, in which the texts are in themselves of no significance and mostly serve to carry the voices. The high-Gothic counterpoint of the 13th Century is entirely free from any connexion with words: it is a *pure architecture of human voices* in which several texts, Latin and vernacular, sacred and secular, were sung together.

sible. But in music too—in the unaccompanied "A capella" of the Palestrina style as well as *a fortiori* in the Passions of Heinrich Schütz, in the fugues of Bach, in the last quartets of Beethoven, and in "Tristan"—we livingly experience *behind* the sensuous impressions a whole world of others. And it is only through these latter that all the fullness and depth of the work begins to be present to us, and it is only mediately—through the images of blond, brown, dusky and golden colours, of sunsets and distant ranked mountain-summits, of storms and spring landscapes, of foundered cities and strange faces which harmony conjures up for us—that it tells us something of itself. It is not an incident that Beethoven wrote his last works when he was deaf—deafness merely released him from the last fetters. For this music, sight and hearing *equally* are bridges into the soul and nothing more. To the Greek this visionary kind of artistic enjoyment was utterly alien. He *felt* the marble with his eye, and the thick tones of an aulos moved him almost *corporally*. For him, eye and ear are the receivers of the *whole* of the impression that he wished to receive. But for us this had ceased to be true even at the stage of Gothic.

In the actual, tones are something extended, limited and numerable just as lines and colours are; harmony, melody, rhyme and rhythm no less so than perspective, proportion, chiaroscuro and outline. The distance separating two kinds of painting can be infinitely greater than that separating the painting and the music of a period. Considered in relation to a statue of Myron, the art of a Poussin landscape is the same as that of a contemporary chamber-cantata; that of Rembrandt as that of the organ works of Buxtehude, Pachelbel and Bach; that of Guardi as that of the Mozart opera—the *inner* form-language is so nearly identical that the dif-

ference between optical and acoustic means is negligible.

The importance which the "science of art" has always attached to a timeless and conceptual delimitation of the individual art-spheres only proves that the fundamentals of the problem have not been attacked. Arts are living units, and the living is incapable of being dissected. The first act of the learned pedant has always been to partition the infinitely wide domain into provinces determined by perfectly superficial criteria of medium and technique and to endow these provinces with eternal validity and immutable (!) form-principles. Thus he separated "Music" and "Painting," "Music" and "Drama," "Painting" and "Sculpture." And then he proceeded to define "the" art of Painting, "the" art of Sculpture, and so on. But in fact the technical form-language is no more than the *mask* of the real work. Style is not what the shallow Semper—worthy contemporary of Darwin and materialism—supposed it to be, the product of material, technique, and purpose. It is the very opposite of this, something inaccessible to art-reason, a revelation of the metaphysical order, a mysterious "must," a Destiny. With the material boundaries of the different arts it has no concern whatever.

To classify the arts according to the character of the sense-impression, then, is to pervert the problem of form in its very enunciation. For how is it possible to predicate a genus "Sculpture" of so general a character as to admit of general laws being evolved from it? What *is* "Sculpture"?

Take painting again. There is no such thing as "*the*" art of Painting, and anyone who compares a drawing of Raphael, effected by outline, with one of Titian, effected by flecks of light and shade, without feeling that they belong to two different arts; any one who does not

realize a dissimilarity of essence between the works of Giotto or Mantegna—relief, created by brush-stroke—and those of Vermeer or Goya—music, created on coloured canvas—such a one will never grasp the deeper questions. As for the frescoes of Polygnotus and the mosaics of Ravenna, there is not even the similarity of technical means to bring them within the alleged genus, and what is there in common between an etching and the art of Fra Angelico, or a proto-Corinthian vase-painting and a Gothic cathedral-window, or the reliefs of Egypt and those of the Parthenon?

If an art has boundaries at all—boundaries of its soul-become-form—they are historical and not technical or physiological boundaries.[4] An art is an organism, not a system. There is no art-genus that runs through all the centuries and all the Cultures. Even where (as in the case of the Renaissance) supposed technical traditions momentarily deceive us into a belief in the eternal validity of antique art-laws, there is at bottom entire discrepance. There is *nothing* in Greek and Roman art that stands in any relation whatever to the form-language of a Donatello statue or a painting of Signorelli or a façade of Michelangelo. *Inwardly,* the Quattrocento is related to the contemporary Gothic and to nothing else. The fact of the archaic Greek Apollo-type being "influenced" by Egyptian portraiture, or early Tuscan representation by Etruscan tomb-painting, implies precisely what is implied by that of Bach's writing a fugue upon an alien theme—he shows what he can express with it. Every individual art—Chinese

[4] Our pedantic method has given us an art-history that excludes music-history; and while the one has become a normal element of higher education, the other has remained an affair solely for the expert. It is just as though one tried to write a history of Greece without taking Sparta into account. The result is a theory of "Art" that is a pious fraud.

landscape or Egyptian plastic or Gothic counterpoint —is *once existent*, and departs with its soul and its symbolism never to return.

II

With this, the notion of Form opens out immensely. Not only the technical instrument, not only the form-language, but also *the choice of art-genus itself* is seen to be an expression-means. What the creation of a masterpiece means for an individual artist—the "Night Watch" for Rembrandt or the "Meistersinger" for Wagner—that the creation of a *species* of art, comprehended as such, means for the life-history of a Culture. It is epochal. Apart from the merest externals, each such art is an individual organism without predecessor or successor. Its theory, technique and convention all belong to its character, and contain nothing of eternal or universal validity. When one of these arts is born, when it is spent, whether it dies or is transmuted into another, why this or that art is dominant in or absent from a particular Culture—all these are questions of Form in the highest sense, just as is that other question of why individual painters and musicians unconsciously avoid certain shades and harmonies or, on the contrary, show preferences so marked that authorship-attributions can be based on them.

The importance of these groups of questions has not yet been recognized by theory, even by that of the present day. And yet it is precisely from this side, the side of their physiognomic, that the arts are accessible to the understanding. Hitherto it has been supposed—without the slightest examination of the weighty questions that the supposition involves—that the several "arts" specified in the conventional classification-scheme

(the validity of which is assumed) are all *possible* at all times and places, and the absence of one or another of them in particular cases is attributed to the accidental lack of creative personalities or impelling circumstances or discriminating patrons to guide "art" on its "way." Here we have what I call a transference of the causality-principle from the world of the become to that of the becoming. Having no eyes for the perfectly different logic and necessity of the Living, for Destiny and the inevitableness and *unique occurrence* of its expression-possibilities, men had recourse to tangible and obvious "causes" for the building of their art-history, which thus came to consist of a series of events of only superficial concordance.

I have already, in the earliest pages of this work, exposed the shallowness of the notion of a linear progression of "mankind" through the stages of "ancient," "mediæval" and "modern," a notion that has made us blind to the true history and structure of higher Cultures. The history of art is a conspicuous case in point. Having assumed as self-evident the existence of a number of constant and well-defined provinces of art, one proceeded to order the history of these several provinces according to the—equally self-evident—scheme of ancient-mediæval-modern, to the exclusion, of course, of Indian and East-Asiatic art, of the art of Axum and Saba, of the Sassanids and of Russia, which if not omitted altogether were at best relegated to appendices. It occurred to no one that such results argued unsoundness in the method; the scheme was there, demanded facts, and must at any price be fed with them. And so a futile up-and-down course was stolidly traced out. Static times were described as "natural pauses," it was called "decline" when some great art in reality died, and "renaissance" where an eye really free from pre-

possessions would have seen another art being born in another landscape to express another humanity. Even to-day we are still taught that the Renaissance was a rebirth of the Classical. And the conclusion was drawn that it is possible and right to take up arts that are found weak or even dead (in this respect the present is a veritable battle-field) and set them going again by conscious reformation-program or forced "revival."

And yet it is precisely in this problem of the end, the impressively sudden end, of a great art—the end of the Attic drama in Euripides, of Florentine sculpture with Michelangelo, of instrumental music in Liszt, Wagner and Bruckner—that the organic character of these arts is most evident. If we look closely enough we shall have no difficulty in convincing ourselves that no *one* art of any greatness has ever been "reborn."

Of the Pyramid style *nothing* passed over into the Doric. *Nothing* connects the Classical temple with the basilica of the Middle East, for the mere taking over of the Classical column as a structural member, though to a superficial observer it seems a fact of the first importance, weighs no more in reality than Goethe's employment of the old mythology in the "Classical Walpurgis Night" scene of "Faust." To believe genuinely in a rebirth of Classical art, or any Classical art, in the Western 15th Century requires a rare stretch of the imagination. And that a great art may die not merely with the Culture but within it, we may see from the fate of music in the Classical world.[5] Possibilities of great music there must have been in the Doric springtime—how otherwise can we account for the importance of old-fashioned Sparta in the eyes of such

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[5] This sentence is not in the original. It has been inserted, and the following sentence modified, for the sake of clarity.—*Tr.*

musicians as there were later (for Terpander, Thaletas and Alcman were effective there when elsewhere the statuary art was merely infantile)?—and yet the Late-Classical world refrained. In just the same fashion everything that the Magian Culture had attempted in the way of frontal portraiture, deep relief and mosaic finally succumbed before the Arabesque; and everything of the plastic that had sprung up in the shade of Gothic cathedrals at Chartres, Reims, Bamberg, Naumburg in the Nürnberg of Peter Vischer and the Florence of Verrocchio, vanished before the oil-painting of Venice and the instrumental music of the Baroque.

III

The temple of Poseidon at Pæstum and the Minster of Ulm, works of the ripest Doric and the ripest Gothic, differ precisely as the Euclidean geometry of bodily bounding-surfaces differs from the analytical geometry of the position of points in space referred to spatial axes. All Classical building begins from the outside, all Western from the inside. The Arabian also begins with the inside, but it stays there. There is one and only one soul, the Faustian, that craves for a style which drives through walls into the limitless universe of space and makes both the exterior and the interior of the building complementary images of one and the same world-feeling. The exterior of the basilica and the domical building may be a *field for ornamentation*, but *architecture* it is not. The impression that meets the beholder as he approaches is that of something shielding, something that hides a secret. The form-language in the cavern-twilight exists for the faithful only—that is the factor common to the highest examples of the style and to the simplest Mithræa and Catacombs, the prime powerful utterance of a new soul. Now, as soon as the

Germanic spirit takes possession of the basilical type, there begins a wondrous mutation of all structural parts, as to both position and significance. Here in the Faustian North the outer form of the building, be it cathedral or mere dwelling-house, begins to be brought into relation with the meaning that governs the arrangement of the interior, a meaning undisclosed in the mosque and nonexistent in the temple. The Faustian building has a *visage* and not merely a façade (whereas the front of a peripteros is, after all, only one of four sides and the centre-domed building in principle has not even a front) and with this visage, this head, is associated an articulated trunk that draws itself out through the broad plain like the cathedral at Speyer, or erects itself to the heavens like the innumerable spires of the original design of Reims. The *motive of the façade,* which greets the beholder and tells him the inner meaning of the house, dominates not only individual major buildings but also the whole aspect of our streets, squares and towns with their characteristic wealth of windows.[6]

The great architecture of the early period is ever the mother of all following arts; it determines the choice of them and the spirit of them. Accordingly, we find that the history of the Classical shaping art is one untiring effort to accomplish one single ideal, viz., the conquest of the free-standing human body as the vessel of the pure real present. The temple of the naked body was to it what the cathedral of voices was to the Faustian from earliest counterpoint to the orchestral writing of the 18th Century. We have failed hitherto to un-

[6] The aspect of the streets of Old Egypt may have been very similar to this, if we can draw conclusions from tesseræ discovered in Cnossus (see H. Bossert, *Alt Kreta* (1921), T. 14). And the Pylon is an undoubted and genuine façade. (Such tesseræ, bearing pictures of windowed houses, are illustrated in Art. *"Ægean Civilization,"* Ency. Brit., XI Edition, Vol. I, p. 251, plate IV, fig. 1.—*Tr.*).

derstand the emotional force of this secular tendency of the Apollinian, because we have not felt how the *purely material, soulless body* (for the Temple of the Body, too, has no "interior"!) is the object which archaic relief, Corinthian painting on clay, and Attic fresco were all striving to obtain until Polycletus and Phidias showed how to achieve it in full. We have, with a wonderful blindness, assumed this kind of sculpture as both authoritative and universally possible, as in fact, "the art of sculpture." We have written its history as one concerned with all peoples and periods, and even to-day our sculptors, under the influence of unproved Renaissance doctrines, speak of the naked human body as the noblest and most genuine object of "the" art of sculpture. Yet in reality this statue-art, the art of the naked body standing free upon its footing and appreciable from all sides alike, existed in the Classical and the Classical only, for it was that Culture alone which quite decisively refused to transcend sense-limits in favour of space. The Egyptian statue is always meant to be seen from the front—it is a variant of plane-relief. And the *seemingly* Classically-conceived statues of the Renaissance (we are astounded, as soon as it occurs to us to count them, to find how few of them there are [7]) are nothing but a semi-Gothic reminiscence.

The evolution of this rigorously *non-spatial* art occupies the three centuries from 650 to 350, a period extending from the completion of the Doric and the simultaneous appearance of a tendency to free the figures from the Egyptian limitation of frontalness [8] to the coming of the Hellenistic and its illusion-painting which

[7] Ghiberti has not outgrown the Gothic, nor has even Donatello; and already in Michelangelo the feeling is Baroque, i.e., musical.

[8] The struggle to fix the problem is visible in the series of "Apollo-figures." See Déonna, *Les Apollons archaïques* (1909).

closed-off the grand style. This sculpture will never be rightly appreciated until it is regarded as the last and highest Classical, as *springing from a plane art, first obeying and then overcoming the fresco.* No doubt the technical origin can be traced to experiments in figure-wise treatment of the pristine column, or the plates that served to cover the temple wall,[9] and no doubt there are here and there imitations of Egyptian works (seated figures of Miletus), although very few Greek artists can ever have seen one.[10] But as a *form-ideal* the statue goes back through relief to the archaic clay-painting in which fresco also originated. Relief, like fresco, is tied to the bodily wall. All this sculpture right down to Myron may be considered as relief detached from the plane. In the end, the figure is treated as a self-contained body apart from the mass of the building, but it remains essentially a silhouette in front of a wall.[11] Direction in depth is excluded, and the work is spread out frontally before the beholder. Even the Marsyas of Myron can be copied upon vases or coins without much trouble or appreciable foreshortenings.[12] Consequently, of the two major "late" arts after 650, fresco definitely has the priority. The small stock of types is always to be found first in vase-figuring, which is often exactly paralleled by quite late sculptures. We know that the Centaur group of the West pediment at Olympia was worked out from a

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[9] Woermann, *Geschichte der Kunst, I* (1915), p. 236. The first tendency is seen in the Samian Hera of Cheramues and the persistent turning of columns into caryatids; the second in the Delian figure dedicated to Artemis by Nicandra, with its relation to the oldest metope-technique.

[10] Miletus was in a particular relation with Egypt through Naucratis.—*Tr.*

[11] Most of the works are pediment-groups or metopes. But even the Apollo-figures and the "Maidens" of the Acropolis could not have stood free.

[12] V. Salis, *Kunst der Griechen* (1919), pp. 47, 98 et seq.

painting. On the Ægina temple, the advance from the West to the East pediment is an advance from the fresco-character to the body-character. The change is completed about 460 with Polycletus, and thenceforward plastic groups become the model for strict painting. But it is from Lysippus that the wholly cubic and "all-ways" treatment becomes thoroughly veristic and yields "fact." Till then, even in the case of Praxiteles, we have still a lateral or planar development of the subject, with a clear outline that is only fully effective in respect of one or two standpoints. But an undeviating testimony to the picture-origin of independent sculpture is the practice of polychroming the marble—a practice unknown to the Renaissance and to Classicism, which would have felt it as barbaric [13]—and we may say the same of the gold-and-ivory statuary and the enamel overlaying of bronze, a metal which already possesses a shining golden tone of its own.

IV

The corresponding stage of Western art occupies the three centuries 1500–1800, between the end of late Gothic and the decay of Rococo which marks the end of the great Faustian style. In this period, conformably to the persistent growth into consciousness of the will to spatial transcendence, it is instrumental music that develops into the ruling art. At the beginning, in the 17th Century, music uses the characteristic tone-colours of the instruments, and the contrasts of strings and wind, human voices and instrumental voices, as means wherewith to *paint*. Its (quite unconscious) ambition is to parallel the great masters from Titian to

[13] The decisive preference of the *white* stone is itself significant of the *opposition* of Renaissance to Classical feeling.

Velasquez and Rembrandt. It makes pictures (in the sonata from Gabrieli [d. 1612] to Corelli [d. 1713] every movement shows a theme embellished with graces and set upon the background of a *basso continuo*), paints heroic landscapes (in the pastoral cantata), and draws a portrait in lines of melody (in Monteverde's "Lament of Ariadne," 1608). With the German masters, all this goes. Painting can take music no further. Music becomes itself *absolute*: it is music that (quite unconsciously again) dominates both painting and architecture in the 18th Century. And, ever more and more decisively, sculpture fades out from among the deeper possibilities of this form-world.

What distinguishes painting as it was before, from painting as it was after, the shift from Florence to Venice—or, to put it more definitely, what separates the painting of Raphael and that of Titian as two entirely distinct arts—is that the plastic spirit of the one associates painting with relief, while the musical spirit of the other works in a technique of visible brush-strokes and atmospheric depth-effects that is akin to the chromatic of string and wind choruses. It is an opposition and not a transition that we have before us, and the recognition of the fact is vital to our understanding of the *organism* of these arts. Here, if anywhere, we have to guard against the abstract hypothesis of "eternal art-laws." "Painting" is a mere word. Gothic glass-painting was an element of Gothic architecture, the servant of its strict symbolism just as the Egyptian and the Arabian and every other art in this stage was the servant of the stone-language. Draped figures were built up as cathedrals were. Their folds were an *ornamentation* of extreme sincerity and severe expressiveness. To criticize their "stiffness" from a naturalistic-imitative point of view is to miss the point entirely.

Similarly "music" is a mere word. Some music there has been everywhere and always, even *before* any genuine Culture, even among the beasts. But the serious music of the Classical was nothing but a *plastic for the ear*. The tetrachords, chromatic and enharmonic, have a structural and not a harmonic meaning: [14] but this is the very difference between body and space. This music was single-voiced. The few instruments that it employed were all developed in respect of capacity for tone-plastic; and naturally therefore it rejected the Egyptian harp, an instrument that was probably akin in tone-colour to the harpsichord. But, above all, the melody—like Classical verse from Homer to Hadrian's time—was treated quantitatively and not accentually; that is, the syllables, their bodies and their *extent*, decided the rhythm. The few fragments that remain suffice to show us that the sensuous charm of this art is something outside our comprehension; but this very fact should cause us also to reconsider our ideas as to the impressions purposed and achieved by the statuary and the fresco, for we do not and cannot experience the charm that these exercised upon the Greek eye.

Equally incomprehensible to us is Chinese music: in

[14] All Greek scales are capable of reduction to "tetrachords" or four-note scales of which the form E—note—note—A is typical. In the diatonic the unspecified inner notes are F, G; in the chromatic they are F, F sharp; and in the enharmonic they are E half-sharp, F. Thus, the chromatic and enharmonic scales do not provide additional notes as the modern chromatic does, but simply displace the inner members of the scale downwards, altering the proportionate distances between the same given total. In Faustian music, on the contrary, the meaning of "enharmonic" is simply *relational*. It is applied to a change, say from A flat to G sharp. The difference between these two is not a quarter-tone but a "very small" interval (theory and practice do not even agree as to which note is the higher, and in tempered instruments with standardized scales the physical difference is eliminated altogether). While a note is being sounded, even without any physical change in it, its harmonic co-ordinates (i.e., substantially, the key of the harmony) may alter, so that henceforth the note, from A flat has become G sharp.—*Tr.*

which, according to educated Chinese, we are never able to distinguish gay from grave.[15] Vice versa, to the Chinese all the music of the West without distinction is *march-music.* Such is the impression that the rhythmic dynamic of our life makes upon the accentless Tao of the Chinese soul, and, indeed, the impression that our entire Culture makes upon an alien humanity—the directional energy of our church-naves and our storeyed façades, the depth-perspectives of our pictures, the march of our tragedy and narrative, not to mention our technics and the whole course of our private and public life. We ourselves have *accent* in our blood and therefore do not notice it. But when our rhythm is juxtaposed with that of an alien life, we find the discordance intolerable.

Arabian music, again, is quite another world. Hitherto we have only observed it through the medium of the Pseudomorphosis, as represented by Byzantine hymns and Jewish psalmody, and even these we know only in so far as they have penetrated to the churches of the far West as antiphons, responsorial psalmody and Ambrosian chants.[16] But it is self-evident that not only the religious west of Edessa (the syncretic cults, especially Syrian sun-worship, the Gnostic and the Mandæan) but also those to the east (Mazdaists, Manichæans, Mithraists, the synagogues of Irak and in due course the Nestorian Christians) must have possessed a sacred music of the same style; that side by side with this a gay secular music developed (above all, amongst the South-Arabian and Sassanid chivalry); and that both

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[15] In the same way the whole of Russian music appears to us infinitely mournful, but real Russians assure us that it is not at all so for themselves.

[16] See articles under these headings in Grove's "Dictionary of Music."—*Tr.*

found their culmination in the Moorish style that reigned from Spain to Persia.

Out of all this wealth, the Faustian soul borrowed only some few church-forms and, moreover, in borrowing them, it instantly transformed them root and branch (10th Century, Hucbald, Guido d'Arezzo). Melodic accent and beat produced the "march," and polyphony (like the rime of contemporary poetry) the image of endless space. To understand this, we have to distinguish between the initiative[17] and the ornamental sides of music, and although owing to the fleeting nature of all tone-creations[18] our knowledge is limited to the musical history of our own West, yet this is quite sufficient to reveal that duality of development which is one of the master-keys of all art-history. The one is soul, landscape, feeling, the other strict form, style, school. West Europe has an *ornamental music of the grand style* (corresponding to the full plastic of the Classical) which is associated with the architectural history of the cathedral, which is closely akin to Scholasticism and Mysticism, and which finds its laws in the motherland of high Gothic between Seine and Scheldt. Counterpoint developed simultaneously with the flying-buttress system, and its source was the "Romanesque" style of the Fauxbourdon and the Discant with their simple parallel and contrary motion.[19] It is an architecture of human voices and, like the statuary-group and the glass-paintings, is only conceivable in the setting of these stone vaultings. With them it is a high art of space, of that space to

[17] In Baroque music the word "imitation" means something quite different from this, viz., the exact repetition of a motive in a new colouring (starting from a different note of the scale).

[18] For all that survives performance is the notes, and these speak only to one who still knows and can manage the tone and technique of the expression-means appropriate to them.

[19] See articles *Fauxbourdon*, *Discant* and *Gimel* in Grove's "Dictionary of Music."—*Tr.*

which Nicolas of Oresme, Bishop of Lisieux, gave mathematical meaning by the introduction of co-ordinates.[20] *This* is the genuine "rinascita" and "reformatio" as Joachim of Floris saw it at the end of the 12th Century —the birth of a new soul mirrored in the form-language of a new art.

Along with this there came into being in castle and village a secular *imitative* music, that of troubadours, Minnesänger and minstrels. As "ars nova" this travelled from the courts of Provence to the palaces of Tuscan patricians about 1300, the time of Dante and Petrarch. It consisted of simple melodies that appealed to the heart with their major and minor, of canzoni, madrigals and caccias, and it included also a type of *galante* operetta (Adam de la Hale's "Robin and Marion"). After 1400, these forms give rise to forms of collective singing—the rondeau and the ballade. All this is "art" for a public.[21] Scenes are painted from life, scenes of love, hunting, chivalry. The point of it is in the melodic inventiveness, instead of in the symbolism of its linear progress.

Thus, musically as otherwise, the castle and the cathedral are distinct. The cathedral *is* music and the castle *makes* music. The one begins with theory, the other with impromptu: it is the distinction between waking consciousness and living existence, between the spiritual and the knightly singer. Imitation stands nearest to life and direction and therefore begins with melody, while the symbolism of counterpoint belongs to extension and through polyphony signifies infinite space.

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[20] Note that Oresme was a contemporary of Machault and Philippe de Vitry, in whose generation the rules and prohibitions of strict counterpoint were definitely established.

[21] Even the first great troubadour, Guilhem of Poitiers, though a reigning sovereign, made it his ambition to be regarded as a "professional," as we should say.—*Tr.*

The result was, on the one side, a store of "eternal" rules and, on the other, an inexhaustible fund of folk-melodies on which even the 18th Century was still drawing. The same contrast reveals itself, artistically, in the *class*-opposition of Renaissance and Reformation. The courtly taste of Florence was antipathetic to the spirit of counterpoint; the evolution of strict musical form from the Motet to the four-voice Mass through Dunstaple, Binchois and Dufay (c. 1430) proceeded wholly within the magic circle of Gothic architecture. From Fra Angelico to Michelangelo the great Netherlanders ruled alone in ornamental music. Lorenzo de' Medici found no one in Florence who understood the strict style, and had to send for Dufay. And while in this region Leonardo and Raphael were painting, in the north Okeghem (d. 1495) and his school and Josquin des Prés (d. 1521) brought the formal polyphony of human voices to the height of fulfilment.

The transition into the "Late" age was heralded in Rome and Venice. With Baroque the leadership in music passes to Italy. But at the same time architecture ceases to be the ruling art and there is formed a group of Faustian special-arts in which oil-painting occupies the central place. About 1560 the empire of the human voice comes to an end in the *a cappella* style of Palestrina and Orlando Lasso (both d. 1594). Its powers could no longer express the passionate drive into the infinite, and it made way for the chorus of instruments, wind and string. And thereupon Venice produced Titian-music, the new madrigal that in its flow and ebb follows the sense of the text. The music of the Gothic is architectural and vocal, that of the Baroque pictorial and instrumental. The one builds, the other operates by means of motives. For all the arts have become urban and therefore secular. We pass from super-personal

Form to the personal expression of the Master, and shortly before 1600 Italy produces the *basso continuo* which requires virtuosi and not pious participants.

Thenceforward, the great task was to extend the tone-corpus into the infinity, or rather to *resolve it into an infinite space of tone.* Gothic had developed the instruments into families of definite timbre. But the new-born "orchestra" no longer observes limitations imposed by the human voice, but treats it as a voice to be combined with other voices—at the same moment as our mathematic proceeds from the geometrical analysis of Fermat to the purely functional analysis of Descartes. In Zarlino's "Harmony" (1558) appears a genuine perspective of pure tonal space. We begin to distinguish between ornamental and fundamental instruments. Melody and embellishment join to produce the Motive, and this in development leads to the rebirth of counterpoint in the form of the fugal style, of which Frescobaldi was the first master and Bach the culmination. To the vocal masses and motets the Baroque opposes its grand, orchestrally-conceived forms of the oratorio (Carissimi), the cantata (Viadana) and the opera (Monteverde). Whether a bass melody be set against upper voices, or upper voices be concerted against one another upon a background of *basso continuo,* always sound-worlds of characteristic expression-quality work reciprocally upon one another in the infinity of tonal space, supporting, intensifying, raising, illuminating, threatening, overshadowing—a music all of interplay, scarcely intelligible save through ideas of contemporary Analysis.

From out of these forms of the early Baroque there proceeded, in the 17th Century, the sonata-like forms of suite, symphony and concerto grosso. The inner structure and the sequence of movements, the thematic working-out and modulation became more and more

firmly established. And thus was reached the great, immensely dynamic, form in which music—now completely bodiless—was raised by Corelli and Handel and Bach to be the ruling art of the West. When Newton and Leibniz, about 1670, discovered the Infinitesimal Calculus, the fugal style was fulfilled. And when, about 1740, Euler began the definitive formulation of functional Analysis, Stamitz and his generation were discovering the last and ripest form of musical ornamentation, the four-part movement[22] as vehicle of pure and unlimited motion. For, at that time, there was still this one step to be taken. The theme of the fugue "is," that of the new sonata-movement "becomes," and the issue of its working out is in the one case a picture, in the other a drama. Instead of a series of pictures we get a cyclic succession,[23] and the real source of this tone-language was in the possibilities, realized at last, of our deepest and most intimate kind of music—the music of the strings. Certain it is that the violin is the noblest of all instruments that the Faustian soul has imagined and trained for the expression of its last secrets, and certain it is, too, that it is in string quartets and violin sonatas that it has experienced its most transcendent and most holy moments of full illumination. Here, *in chamber-music, Western art as a whole reaches its highest point.* Here our prime symbol of endless space is expressed as completely as the Spearman of Polycletus expresses that of intense bodiliness. When one of those ineffably

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22 A movement in sonata form consists essentially of (*a*) First Subject; (*b*) Second Subject (in an allied key); (*c*) Working-out, or free development of the themes grouped under (*a*) and (*b*); and (*d*) Recapitulation, in which the two subjects are repeated in the key of the tonic.

The English usage is to consider (*a*) and (*b*) with the bridge or modulation connecting them, together as the "Exposition," and the form is consequently designated "three-part."—*Tr.*

23 Einstein, *Gesch. der Musik*, p. 67.

yearning violin-melodies wanders through the spaces expanded around it by the orchestration of Tartini or Nardini, Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven, we know ourselves in the presence of an art beside which that of the Acropolis is alone worthy to be set.

With this, the Faustian music becomes dominant among the Faustian arts. It banishes the plastic of the statue and tolerates only the minor art—an entirely musical, refined, un-Classical and counter-Renaissance art—of porcelain, which (as a discovery of the West) is contemporary with the rise of chamber-music to full effectiveness. Whereas the statuary of Gothic is through-and-through architectural ornamentation, human espalier-work, that of the Rococo remarkably exemplifies the pseudo-plastic that results from entire subjection to the form-language of music, and shows to what a degree the technique governing the presented foreground can be in contradiction with the real expression-language that is hidden behind it. Compare Coysevox's [24] (1686) crouching Venus in the Louvre with its Classical prototype in the Vatican—in the one plastic is understudying music, in the other plastic is itself. Terms like "staccato," "accelerando," "andante" and "allegro" best describe the kind of movements that we have here, the flow of the lines, the fluidity in the being of the stone itself which like the porcelain has more or less lost its fine compactness. Hence our feeling that the granular marble is out of keeping. Hence, too, the wholly un-Classical tendency to work with reference to effects of light and shade. This is quite in conformity with the principles of oil-painting from Titian onwards. That which in the 18th Century is called "colour" in an etching, a drawing, or a sculpture-group really signifies

[24] Coysevox lived 1640–1720. Much of the embellishment and statuary of Versailles is his work.—*Tr.*

music. Music dominates the painting of Watteau and Fragonard and the art of Gobelins and pastels, and since then, have we not acquired the habit of speaking of colour-tones or tone-colours? And do not the very words imply a recognition of a final *homogeneity* between the two arts, superficially dissimilar as they are? And are not these same words perfectly meaningless as applied to *any and every* Classical art? But music did not stop there; it transmuted also the architecture of Bernini's Baroque into accord with its own spirit, and made of it Rococo, a style of transcendent ornamentation upon which lights (or rather "tones") play to dissolve ceilings, walls and everything else constructional and actual into polyphonies and harmonies, with architectural trills and cadences and runs to complete the identification of the form-language of these halls and galleries with that of the music imagined for them. Dresden and Vienna are the homes of this late and soon-extinguished fairy-land of *visible* chamber music, of curved furniture and mirror-halls, and shepherdesses in verse and porcelain. It is the final brilliant autumn with which the Western soul completes the expression of its high style. And in the Vienna of the Congress-time it faded and died.

Elie Faure

Of Civilization[1]

I

I ONCE knew a negro, a citizen of the United States, who, not having found in Paris an elevator in every house, bathrooms in every apartment, electric light on every floor, affirmed his black civilization to be superior to French civilization.

The practically unanimous consent of the white races seems to me to envisage civilization as being of the same color, if I may say so, as this negro saw it. It is not the least crime of the overstressed industrialism under which we have lived for two-thirds of a century, that we should do so—yet I do not say that we are right in condemning industrialism. I can still hear Carrière, who had more spirit, perhaps, than talent, replying to an idealistic and mature woman who in his presence was covering with anathema both our practical materialism and the base organs whose needs have demanded its creation: "Madame, upon leaving here you will be very grateful that God has given you legs to catch the omnibus."

Surely. Here, as elsewhere, it is necessary to maintain our equilibrium. Scientific progress is not civilization. It is not even essential progress. But it is, nevertheless, a progress. The railway is dirty, but if circumstances insist that a Parisian should be to-morrow in

[1] Reprinted, with permission, from *The Dance over Fire and Water*, by Elie Faure (translated from the French by J. G. Fletcher). New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926.

Rome, he will bless the railway. The telephone is annoying, but it is not useless for giving, or returning, some love rendezvous. And if electric light is more cruel to the eyes than either petroleum or oil, it prevents us from making our fingers dirty or from striking a whole boxful of matches when we have only a necktie to take from the bottom of a drawer. Ruskin will tell me, doubtless, that these tyrannical necessities are provoked precisely by the telephone, the electric light, or the railway. It is quite possible and in part true. Nevertheless, if the organ develops and frequently falsifies its function, it is also the function which creates the organ, and since I sustain other organs more inherent to my personality which the great majority of religions have in vain sought to conjure away, I accept these willingly as means to abridge time and to bring distance nearer.

I go even further. These means exercise, upon the whole of our deepest functions, sensibility, intelligence, and will power, a powerful action. They multiply to the infinite the number of relations possible between men, the number of relations between the intimate elements of the organism of each man. The sum total of the spirit, the sum total of the sensible universe, become thus more closely linked, more complex, the sources of emotion, of effort, of drama, are opened in a hundred still unexplored corners of the brain and even of the heart. And when a man, or a group of men, is designed by circumstances or by chance to conceive and construct a new work of art, that work of art has every chance of becoming a more rich and more harmonious symphony, the number and perfection of the instruments being given. All the chances, I say. If they are not grasped, that is the fault of the man or the group of men in question. Is it necessary to say that despite its complex expression, or perhaps because of it, a picture or a statue of such-

and-such an official artist of to-day is infinitely less complex and less symphonically conceived than a stone carving made by some slave in the depths of an Egyptian tomb, six thousand years ago? But, on the other hand, if a picture by Renoir is more complex and more symphonically conceived than this stone carving, if the emotion which it procures us is more unexpected, is it necessary to say that it is neither more profound nor more rare, and has nothing to do with this common notion of "progress" which is presented to the spirit of most men as a simultaneous increase in science and in morality?

Æsthetic progress, understood in the vulgar sense, that is to say as a continuous ascent in beauty, in nobility, and in power of that work of art, has then every chance of being nearly as chimerical as moral progress and for the same reasons. Rousseau deceived himself, I think, when he said that morality has diminished since the first men. But it has not increased. The moral work of art, like the æsthetic work of art, has become, doubtless, more complex. But like it, it is made of immovable elements, which come together into play each time that it is necessary for a man, a people, to conceive or to realize some new equilibrium. There remains material, or scientific progress, of which I am just envisaging the function. This is the sole progress which is undeniable. But also it is the only one which can limit its ambition to being no more than a tool. A tool that one can employ to construct new spiritual monuments doubtless, but a tool, a material tool, and worth only what the men are worth who make use of it.

That was clearly shown fifteen or twenty years ago. What one took for a civilization was in this case only an instrument, or rather a method. A European people, endowed with the same equipment as all European peoples, was conquered by an Asiatic people who had

only recently adopted this equipment. Why? Because, despite her late ascent to "civilization," Japan represented, in the sum total of her effort, a unity of conception and direction which the Russians never suspected. I know quite well what Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Moussorgsky signify. Yet despite the profundity of their action, it cannot pretend to have exercised upon Russian culture in general a determination so ancient, so broad, so sustained, as that of the Japanese artists upon Japanese culture. It requires much more refinement and subtlety of spirit to design and enjoy a print than to drive an omnibus or to make use of one. When the Japanese people resolved to adopt a scientific instrument, it was easy for them to manage it. And their style triumphed over the Russian style because it was the superior instrument.

II

Style. It is this and this only which defines a civilization. Or rather, any particular civilization. When we look behind us into History, the route we have followed displays unequal summits and depressions. Every real civilization offers, from far off, a monumental aspect, something possessing duration, and perceived as occupying a certain space, of which all the elements, by means of peace and war, tragedy and idyll, dance and epic, despair and laughter, are taken up into the creative achievement, and there fused into a complete whole which we can take in at a glance. Except for the lyrical expression of its emotion, the poetic, plastic, or musical stylization of its sensibility, a people leaves nothing behind. The history of Egypt is like a geometrical theorem, stated in stone, subtly varied, undulating, profound as music, which fifty centuries have worked upon.

Except for the system of relations which its tragedies, its dialogues, its temples, and its statues established within the limits of intellectual consciousness, nothing would exist to define Greece for us. Rome would signify nothing, if its annals, its circuses, its baths, and its aqueducts had not fixed the sign of its administration and of its laws. We could have no idea of the ocean which ceaselessly moves through the Hindu soul, if we did not know its chiseled mountains and its moving poems. Nor could we know that faculty which France has always shown of passing a measured judgment upon the flood of lyrical or tragic emotions which all the other peoples pour into it, without its palaces and its churches, its moralists and its orators. Nor could we grasp the need to inscribe the eternal drama which inhabits it between the decisive lines of a passionate gesture, if we lacked the austere frescoes and the rectangular palaces which Italy has given to us. Nor, without its musicians, could we tell anything about that sensual power, victorious over its own pessimistic interpretation of the world, by which Germany can be recognized. It is the artist who creates and develops and finishes, undermines and dissolves, a civilization, because it is he who creates and develops and finishes, undermines and dissolves, the style which expresses it and sums it up in its most sensitive directions, its most decisive movements, according to its most clearly stated plans, its most vividly living profiles. It is a lyric and not a moral phenomenon, dynamic and not static. Not a discipline always arrested in view of a perfection defined in advance as attainable, but a violent drama, chaotic in its elements which break and tear one another, arranged in that form which it takes when it comes from the hero or the heroic people who have the incredible power to express it for one moment. A luminous point of equilibrium between

two pitch-black abysses of anarchy. A provisional order in the spirits and the societies which it passes through, definitive in the works it leaves behind, eternal because alive.

III

I do not believe that there exists, in the entire history of art, from the most distant depths of our old adventure to us who are alive to-day, and from the enchanted islands of the Pacific to the fertile plains of the Occident, a work which symbolizes with more majesty the spirit of civilization itself, than the pediment of the temple of Olympia, on which a great anonymous sculptor has told the myth of Apollo rising up amidst the conflict of the Lapithæ and the Centaurs to quiet them. Alone he is calm, in the midst of hooves which beat upon the rock, of axes that crash through skulls, of knives that pierce breasts, of clamors of rage and death. Upright, gleaming amid these convulsed forms, these limbs that contract, these fists that are clenched, these nails and teeth that tear at the flesh, he has a serene forehead and a stretched-out arm. In the midst of the perpetual conflict between the mortal forces of instincts unloosed against one another, he is the spirit who recognizes them in himself in order to harmonize them in the poem without withdrawing them from the universe. It is the precise rôle of the artist. It is shown in the grace of Giotto arranging around his death-beds living sensibilities. It is in the energy which Michael Angelo possessed in order to realize, between intelligence uplifting itself, and matter tending to drag it down, that sense of balance which he pursued unceasingly, which matter and intelligence always broke down, but which he heroically re-established by an always victorious effort. It is in the ease of Raphael reassembling under a single ara-

besque, which separates their proper function, a world of anarchic forms. It is in the drunkenness of Shakespeare conciliating in lyric indifference the contradictory movements of the drama of passion. It is in the power of Rubens twisting in every sense, as clay in the flame, the universal forces released by the current of a river, by the flow of sap, the pulsations of blood and of will. It is in the supernatural magic of Beethoven reuniting in the orchestral multitude the multiform voices of God.

In the general disorder, in the universal breaking-down of equilibrium, the need for order and equilibrium is more imperious than ever. It is natural that the artist should appear, above all, during or immediately after the most terrible epochs of history, because he is the man of order above all, the sole man of order who exists. His unique function is to establish order in himself, to recognize in other artists the need for an analogous order, and by insensible passages to combine his proper order with the order of other artists, so as to be able to create with them the style that defines their civilization. The highest civilization is the most artistic, the artist being the most civilized of all men, because he is, of all men, the one in whom the need to arrange and organize life is the most despotic and the most sustained. If we can imagine an epoch, or a country, in which every man is an artist—perhaps that state existed in ancient Egypt, and there were gleams of it, surely, in classical Greece, in France of the thirteenth century, and in Japan —we would obtain the most faithful picture of that which could and should be a civilization. In this sense, our nineteenth century is, undoubtedly, one of the least civilized epochs in history; rich in artists, it is poor in style, the artist remaining isolated. There is no architecture, and architecture has always been the most characteristic expression of civilized peoples.

It is possible that a day may come, when in order to destroy the image, at the same time rational and lyrical, under which we can only, in my opinion, represent civilization—it is possible that a day may come in which the scientific conception of this great collective phenomenon will triumph, and permit only method, mechanism, social automatism to have their say, and to constitute a society analogous to that of the bees, and freed alike from catastrophes of enthusiasm and intuition. At the same time individuality, and all that conditions it—imagination, nervousness, restlessness, the taste for adventure, love, and in consequence revolutions and wars—will disappear. And art at the same time, doubtless. Is this state to be hoped for? I do not know, as I am not living in the future.

That which I know, and feel, above all, is that such a civilization seems to me hardly thinkable. And I am afraid that it would become, by its cruel lucidity, its precision, its prevision, its mathematic determination, although lacking in war and in drama, a thousand times more atrocious than ours, seen under its most terrible aspects. Universal happiness would kill joy, kill hope, kill generosity. Everything being at the same level, none would aspire to rise. The intelligence, turning emptily in its diamond-hard circle, would rejoin unconsciousness, and everything that makes for the nobility of blood-stained man, seeking an interior good impossible to grasp, would dissolve into the metaphysical perfection of nothingness. If it is necessary to choose between the absolute rationalism which would stabilize civilization, and the myth always living yet always renewed which civilization pursues in all possible forms, without ever fixing it in definite images, it is for the myth that I would choose.

IV

Is not this choice imposed upon us by the very nature of things? It is not a myth, and one of the most daring, or rather the most seductive, this belief in a rational organization which, driven to its last consequences, would destroy even our own effort? Has not this myth already its martyrs, its legend? Does not so-called scientific civilization offer, as its basis, unprovable hypotheses, from which have arisen monuments whose conceptual foundations are as lacking in objective reality as the artistic myths of the beginnings of Egypt, of India, of Greece, creators of indestructible temples and of materialized gods? Is not mathematics itself entirely a myth, a symbolic way of speaking? And the most mythical, perhaps, because the most symbolic? The great cosmic constructions, the system of Copernicus, the system of Newton, the system of Lamarck, the system of Laplace, are these not all artistic intuitions, new languages which we cannot ignore, and which by this very fact acquire a secondary reality? In what respect are they more verifiable, in what respect even are they more true than the myth of Genesis, for example, by which a whole people was nourished in order to elaborate in them notions on which we of to-day are still living? And the myths which we of to-day consider as having been entirely destroyed by science, the system of Ptolemy, for instance—did these prevent Greek civilization from attaining the most decisive and harmonious equilibrium?

The myth, which is the basis of every civilization, is the first work of collective art, summing up the primitive effort, a poetic transposition of the struggles of the human spirit against evil and disorder. I do not except, it goes without saying, either the myth of Copernicus,

or the myth of Lamarck, or the myth of Laplace, destined to establish, in the apparent chaos of matter and of life, a continuity and a rhythm of which man has need in order to believe in the existence of the sensible world and to utilize it to his profit. I have already spoken of Genesis. There is, for instance, also the myth of Heracles, introducing by force an order in the midst of the brutality of instinct. There is the myth of Prometheus, stealing fire from Jupiter in order to enlighten man's brow with the intention of snatching from destiny the direction of the future. There is the myth of Jesus, ordering in the midst of the violence of contradictory passions the poetic life of the heart. A vast atmosphere of myth accompanies our footsteps. The myth changes its form, its envelope, one may say, but the need for it persists invincibly in our souls. Ceaselessly it is created before us, and, in our own days, a great social myth is being organized in the innocence of multitudes, though we cannot as yet make more precise its lyric form, the kernel of the civilization of to-morrow. The myth is the necessary illusion which we imagine each time to be the supreme truth, and which is only each time a fleeting and temporary aspect of that supreme truth which we cannot grasp without condemning ourselves to death.

Hence each new myth necessitates the existence of a great need; a great collective sentiment which, conflicting with satisfied needs and individual sentiments, provokes terrible reactions and resistances. War and revolution have, up to now, constituted the bloody transition stage from one myth to another, from a form of worn-out civilization to a new form proposed by experience. We have been witnesses of the cruelty of scientific myths—"the survival of the fittest," for example. But pacific myths, such as that of Jesus, for instance, are not less murderous. More murderous perhaps because they im-

pose upon the spirit the greatest sum total of illusion, the illusion to which we cling the longest, because it is the most consoling, and which we attempt to propagate, to impose, to defend with the most fanatic passion.

V

War and revolution, the drama transported from the field of desire into the field of conquest and reacting again upon the field of desire, are, in consequence, both one and another, an integral and active part of civilization. This is so true that war and revolution take on the forms of civilization, like the dance, the poem, architecture, or the song. War is nothing more than a stylization of violence, and war takes on, according to the people or the epoch that wages it, the style of that particular people or epoch. It is prepared, in its highest expression, by thinkers and artists, and when that highest expression appears, it is entirely in accordance with them. It is logical with Cæsar, Cartesian with Turenne, in turn rationalist and romantic with Napoleon. The history of Livy, the paved roads, the aqueducts, correspond to the former. To the second belong the architecture of Mansard, the gardens of Le Nôtre, the tragedies of Racine, the walls of Vauban. To the third, the criticism of Montesquieu and Voltaire, inflamed by the passion and sentiment of Rousseau and Diderot. A revolution, on the other hand, breaks out whenever a great stage-setting becomes worn out, whenever an ancient faith diminishes and a new faith seeks to rise. Between wars and revolutions there is sometimes opposition, sometimes the agreement which one finds according to place and epoch, between that which has style and that which has life. Apart from the summits—that of Cæsar, for example, where the most bloody civil wars of Rome

correspond to the most brilliant period of military conquest; that of Turenne, where, for the whole of Europe, religious and foreign wars, both incessant for a century, become intertwined profoundly; and that of Napoleon in which one of the greatest social convulsions of history is enlarged by the force of warlike expansion—apart from these summits in which the harmony is realized for an hour, and in a single spirit, between life and style, revolution is a war without style, warfare is a revolution without life. And their profound rôle is that one tends to incite life when style has no more life, and the other to recreate style when life has no more style. For this reason, revolution and war seem to me to be the most cruel factors certainly, but up to now the most necessary, also, of civilization.

Edwin Muir

James Joyce[1]

I

NO OTHER novelist who has written in English has had a greater mastery than Mr. Joyce of language as an instrument of literary expression, and no one else, probably, has striven so consciously to attain it. *Dubliners* was an ideal apprentice piece for an artist; in it Mr. Joyce set himself to describe accurately the things he saw, attempting at the beginning what most writers achieve towards the end. The *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* marked a further stage. That book was as much a recreation of language as a record of experience. The marvellous dialogue which appeared first in it was not like the transcriptions of ordinary talk in *Dubliners;* it was a second language which was used consciously to vary and complete the lingual pattern of the work. That pattern of speech seemed complete in itself, a thing of different nature from, but as real as, the events and experiences, many of them sordid, which it described. There were thus two values in the novel, separate, yet necessary to each other: the value of language and that of life, the value of art and that of experience. To Mr. Joyce the first of these is pure, the second mixed. Art must descend into life, the word must seek out all it can and enter into it; yet, having entered into it, it returns and remains pure in the con-

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sciousness of the artist. Life cannot soil it, but only a disobedience of its own laws.

In the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Mr. Joyce acquired the mastery of language, the knowledge of and reverence for its mysteries, which prepared him for *Ulysses*. He learnt, too, for the second time, the strict realism which, because it demands perfect exactitude in the rendering, is valuable as a discipline, makes an intensive demand on the artist's powers of expression, and by putting a strain on them enhances them. In embracing this realism he discarded the facile sensibility of his time, which was occupied only with the secondary phenomena of consciousness—with the psychological effect of the object rather than the object, with distinctions rather than with things—and which in that preoccupation while seizing the shadow lost the substance. The *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* not only left Mr. Joyce with a greater command over English than any other novelist had possessed; it was a sort of self-inoculation against a sensibility grown burdensome. Without either of these *Ulysses* could never have been written. For in *Ulysses* the dual values of the *Portrait*, the values of life and art, of reality and imagination, are developed side by side until each attains its maximum of significance, and the discrepancy between them issues in a form of humour which through its intellectual profundity becomes universal. It is a humour not of fashion, nor of character, but of the processes of life, those processes which create history and produce religions and civilizations, while leaving the great part of the human race, the average sensual man outside us and within us, spiritually unchanged and apparently unchangeable. It sets forth the dreams of religion, the magic of language, the splendours of the intellect, the revolutions of history, over against the simple facts: the

naïvety of physical desire, the functions of the body, the triviality of the floating thoughts the body sends up into our minds. A theme so tremendous could only be expressed in great tragedy or great comedy, could only in one of these two ways be lifted into a plane where it no longer overwhelms us, and where having passed through it we are freed from its worst oppression. Had Mr. Joyce not inoculated himself against sensibility by an overdose of realism he could never have attained this emancipating comic vision of the entire modern world. Had he not been so sensitive that he suffered monstrously from his sensibility his comedy would have had no driving power behind it. One feels again and again in *Ulysses* that the uproariousness of the farce, the recklessness of the blasphemy, is wildest where the suffering of the artist has been most intense. A writer whose sufferings were so great and so conscious needed a more elaborate technique than most writers do, as much to put a distance between himself and his sufferings as to express them.

Dubliners and the *Portrait* were a necessary preparation, an apprenticeship strengthening the artist against life. They were exercises working out a part of Mr. Joyce's problem; but in *Ulysses* the whole problem is faced and to the extent of Mr. Joyce's present powers resolved. That problem must needs have been the problem of all the things from which he suffered, for the sincere artist is distinguished from the rest by the fact that his essential concern is with the things which make him suffer, the things, in other words, which stand between him and freedom. There is thus a necessary and an organic relation between him and his work, to create being, as Ibsen said, an act of emancipation. But when, as in *Ulysses*, the creation is encyclopædic, when it attempts to gain freedom not from this or that, but from

all the bonds, all the suffering, of the artist's soul, the impulse from which it started becomes a part of the autobiography of the book as well as of the writer. What Mr. Joyce suffered from in writing Ulysses was obviously in its completeness the life he had known; our modern world in all its intellectual manifestations as well as in its full banality; in its beliefs, its hopes, its charities, its reverences; its religion, patriotism, humanitarianism, science, literature, politics; its illusions as well as its realities. How could the full volume of all these burdensome hopes, theories, sensibilities, banalities, cruelties, meannesses, sensualities, be rendered in a work of art? Obviously not in a story, an action having a beginning, a development, a climax and an end, but rather in a record of the most obvious unit of time in which all these could manifest themselves, in that unit of time which begins with something recalling birth and ends in something resembling death: in a day. *Ulysses* is a complete course, a set banquet, of the modern consciousness. And being that no other unit could have served; the author could not have got into the record of a year what he has got into the record of a day.

But this banquet of the modern consciousness was to be a comic summing up as well as a banquet; it was to be not only abundant, but so burdensomely, absurdly abundant that all the courses would be made to appear ridiculous, as Rabelais made the courses of the medieval banquet ridiculous. And as Mr. Joyce's encyclopædic plan justified the time unit of his chronicle, so his comic intention justified the minuteness of his portrayal, his huge accumulation of imaginative material. His humour is on one side, like that of Rabelais, a piling up of one burden on the mind after another until the breaking point is reached—the breaking point of laughter. It operates by oppressing us consciously with all the things

which oppress us unconsciously, and by exaggerating all this until it seems ridiculous that we should bear it, or more exactly that it should exist at all. A sense of this or that anomaly in social relations, the sense which finds expression in polite comedy, is far too light to shift this immense weight. To do that comedy must include as many factors as the greatest tragedy; it must embrace not only man, but all that he believes in, the whole anthropomorphic cosmos. But even when the absurdities of the spirit are piled up in this way they are still not in the realm of universal comedy: the last touch is still wanting. That is given by a running contrast between the vast symbols invented by man and his simple earthly reactions, between the extravagance of belief and the simplicity of fact, the decency of civilized life and the unseemliness of instinct. That was the mainspring of Rabelais' humour, and it is also that of Mr. Joyce's. The more absurd and minute the description of physiological reactions, the greater obviously the effect. On the one hand an infinite immensity, on the other an infinitesimal smallness; the intellectual dreams and spiritual struggles of Stephen Dedalus in the one balance, the vagaries of Leopold Bloom's instincts in the other; around us the phantoms our minds have created, and within us the utilitarian functions of our bodies. And as the intellectual shapes which man has conceived to be first a release and then a burden are exaggerated, so his physical idiosyncrasies, his trifling thoughts, are refined upon. There is in Mr. Joyce's obscenity as in that of Rabelais an intellectual quality, as if in searching the recondite secrets of the natural processes of the body he were trying to penetrate to an unconscious humour of the cells, of those elementary principles of life which have built up not only the body but all this phantasmal structure which we call thought, religion and civilization.

His emphasis on the unseemly, on what, in other words, we have surpassed, depend upon, and wish to forget, is, at any rate, a necessary element in this kind of humour and an essential part of the plan of *Ulysses*. It is perverse, that is to say, intellectualized deliberately, but so it had to be to achieve its purpose.

The vision of the world whose mainspring is in this radical sense of contrast is one which, if it did not issue in humour, would be nightmare. In *Ulysses* it does not always issue in humour. The brothel scene is horrible partly because it is a misshapen birth, because, conceived as a grand example of the humour of horror, it attains through its failure an atmosphere of horror which because it is unintentional is strictly monstrous, and incapable of being resolved either into art or into human experience. This scene is a work of genius; it is more astonishing than anything else Mr. Joyce has written; but it has the portentous appearance of something torn from the womb of imagination, not the completeness of something born of it. We derive from it a vivid notion of the monstrous suffering through which the artist is passing; but here he has not passed beyond it; and we suffer equally as participators in the horrors of a raw experience and as spectators of a heroic but unavailing attempt to escape from it and set it in the realm of freedom. Had Mr. Joyce succeeded with this gigantic scene he would have produced something supreme in literature and not merely something supremely astounding and terrifying. It was obviously designed to be the climax of the work; in it the last resources of the theme were to be brought on the stage; the unconscious desires which up to now had been allowed only a chance or oblique expression were to come nakedly to the surface and attain freedom. They do not attain freedom. The brothel scene is not a release of all the oppressions and inhibi-

tions of life in our time; it is rather a gigantic attempt to attain release.

But if we grant this crucial failure in the book, and a number of minor failures, there remains more comedy in the grand style than has appeared in our literature since the Elizabethan age. The last chapter has been much praised, but there are others only less admirable. The scene in the pub. where Bloom is routed by the Citizen produces by an openly mechanical technique Mr. Joyce's sense of contrast between an ordinary happening in all its banality and richness and the fantastic and etiolated symbols which the desires of men and the conventions of literature discover for it. Here it is the obviousness of the means, the mechanical ease with which the simple event assumes conventional or lofty forms in the fancy, that is at the root of the humour. We seem to see the illusions at their normal work. The banal fact and the fantastic interpretation are both present before our eyes, are both obvious and credible (the one arising spontaneously from the other), and are both ridiculous. The chapter of parodies, which has been so much criticized, is still more remarkable. There we see the figure of Mr. Bloom passing, as it were, through a comic pageant of the English spirit. In his progression he assumes a sort of absurd universality; he is a man "of Israel's folk . . . that on earth wandering far had fared"; he is "childe Leopold" and "sir Leopold that had for his cognizance the flower of quiet," and "Master Calmer," and "Leop. Bloom of Crawford's journal sitting snug with a covey of wags," and "Mr. L. Bloom (Pubb. Canv.)." He is a type, and a succession of types through history, and a multiplication of types in space; one person in himself and many persons in time and in the minds of men. In this scene Mr. Joyce's comic imagination is at its height; it raises Mr. Bloom into a legendary

figure and gives him history and the world for his stage. But in doing that it fulfils once more the requirements of Mr. Joyce's humour, for to squat Mr. Bloom on the centre of that stage was to attain a comic vision of the world and of history.

What is it that through this use of contrast, this breaking of our resistances by accumulation, Mr. Joyce tries to set in the plane of low comedy? First of all, professional seriousness of all kinds, and secondly the objects about which people are serious in this way: religion, to which the comic reaction is blasphemy; patriotism, to which it is little less; literature, to which it is parody; the claims of science, to which it is an application of anti-climax; sex, to which it is obscenity. When comedy attempts to become universal it has perforce to include blasphemy and obscenity, for these are the two poles of this comedy just as the soul and the body are the two poles of human existence. To see religion with the eyes of comedy is not, of course, to laugh it out of existence, any more than to see sex comically is to destroy it. All that comedy can destroy is strictly the second-rate, everything that is not in its mode the best, everything less genuine than the genuine —a class of thoughts and emotions which make up the preponderating part of the experience of most people and of all ages, and is a permanent burden which at times may become unbearable. Books such as *Ulysses* and *Gargantua* can only be written out of an almost insupportable feeling of oppression; for humour on this scale the sense of oppression is needed as a driving power. The load of oppression which Rabelais cleared away we can recognize now clearly enough; it is more difficult to realize, although it is easy to feel, what it is that oppresses in our age a creative writer like Mr. Joyce. But when the reverences of any time are taken very

seriously and not very intensely, when a belief in enlightenment, progress and humanity becomes habitual, and men act and think with a fearful eye on it and on the most mediocre of its priests, it has already become as injurious to the creative impulse as the strictest obscurantism could be. It is a weight of second-rate sentiment and thought, and the time comes when the only thing to be done is to clear it away.

To destroy so completely as Mr. Joyce does in *Ulysses* is to make a new start. Or more exactly, the new start must have been made before the destruction began, for the new thing destroys only that it may have room to grow in freedom. But what is new in this sense in *Ulysses* it is hazardous to attempt to say yet; for the things which are most new in it have a breath of an antiquity which seems to antedate the antiquity of classical literature, and to come out of a folk rather than a literary inspiration. Mr. Joyce's prostitutes in the brothel scene exist neither in the world of literature, as that world has been conceived almost since its beginning, nor in the world of fact. They are rather figures in a folk-lore which mankind continually creates, or rather carries with it; creations and types in the dream in which sensual humanity lives, and which to humanity is the visible world. This folk-lore, which is the æsthetic utterance of the illiterate classes and of the illiterate parts of our nature, which co-exists with literature, but in a separate world—is not inarticulate; but it expresses itself anonymously, and is such a constant attribute of human life that it rarely feels the need of the more permanent, the more specialized, expression of art. It attains its perfection from day to day by means which are as suited to its purposes as the means of literature are to the purposes of literature. Yet from it literature arose, for like literature, it is æsthetic, and

has the freedom of perception which can only come when men are delivered from their utilitarian prejudices. And to it accordingly literature must periodically come back, as much to test as to renew itself. This is the world to which Mr. Joyce has in part returned, in part striven to return, in *Ulysses*. He has seen, as only a profound theorist on art could have seen, that the sources of art lie here, and that here is the primary division in our consciousness from which flow on the one hand the laws of art, and on the other the laws of the practical world in which we live. The great categories of literature, such as the pathetic, the tragic, and the comic, which with the interior development of literature tend ever to become more pure, more formal, Mr. Joyce has related to the loose and undifferentiated categories of popular imagination, and, starting from these, has set out to attain a more essential pathos, a more complete comedy, than the conventions of modern literature could have given him. He has not escaped the dangers of such an ambitious attempt. In *Ulysses* there are passages of unassimilated folk-lore which we feel do not belong to literature—diurnal phrases of Dublin talk which should not have survived the day, which, perfect in their time and place, get a false emphasis when set deliberately into the frame of a work of imagination. But where the attempt is successful, Mr. Joyce's imagination has a unique immediacy, a unique originality. In one glance we seem to see the life which he describes immediately before and immediately after he has set his seal upon it, and the transformation of reality into art takes place, as it were, under our eyes. Then we feel sometimes that in sweeping aside the æsthetic sense of three centuries, Mr. Joyce has penetrated to the æsthetic consciousness in itself, the æsthetic consciousness, that is to say, before

it has become selective and exclusive, as the more it is developed and refined it tends to become. It is, of course, obvious that the totality of the responses of that consciousness cannot be rendered in literature, of which selection is not merely a virtue, but also the condition. Yet in the history of literature, as has often been shown, the principle of selection sometimes becomes a conventional, an arbitrary one, and, indeed, continually tends to do so; and, therefore, it is at rare times necessary for the artist to put himself in a position where a fundamental act of selection becomes compulsory, and where he feels that every decision, whether to include or to reject, is significant not only on traditional grounds, but is made by his own unconditional volition and as if for the first time. *Ulysses* not only raises the problem of selection again; in part, it answers it by bringing into literature things banished from it, as we now see more clearly, on moral and conventional rather than essential grounds. In doing that, Mr. Joyce has both enriched literature and potentially widened its scope.

II

Ulysses showed the direction in which literature for ten years had been moving; it showed also the direction, or rather some of the directions, in which—who knows for how long?—it will move. Into it various currents, Irish, cosmopolitan, personal, came together, and out of it they issued again clarified and transformed. Analyzing *Ulysses* one might have drawn a chart of the future of literature, showing not only what would be attempted, but also what with good luck would be achieved; or rather one might have done so if among the various streams collected together in *Ulysses* there had not been one, and the most potent, which, mingling with the

others, changed them, contributed to them something occult. This was Mr. Joyce's genius, over which nobody but himself had control. For the rest he not only hammered out a new grammar of literary art in *Ulysses;* he discovered a new field of æsthetic experience (a field on which others had laboured without knowing what it was); and to describe it he invented a magic of speech unessayed for a long time. It was because he went back so far to the fundamentals of art that his book had its enigmatic, primal atmosphere, and seemed, in spite of its modernity, hoary with years. One did not know whether to be astonished most by Mr. Joyce's systematic method or his discoveries, by his discoveries or his inventions. He renewed both the subject-matter of literature and the speech in which artists may for some time express it. He found the language for which Mr. George Moore made an unsuccessful voyage to Dublin, but which was there, and in other parts of the world, all the time. He evoked in certain collocations of words a malignant necromancy such as poets have found in certain landscapes, calling out their hidden evil. That his magic was always black magic was the chief sign of his limitation as an artist. He was concerned with the roots of life and not with its flowering; and where life has not yet blossomed, where the unconscious has not yet freed and attenuated itself in the conscious (as for example in the lives of primitive peoples, in our dreams, in our blind desires), all magic is black magic. Mr. Joyce went over the conscious life of men like a plough and showed the richness of the soil; and *Ulysses* gives us the sense of black magic which ploughed fields sometimes evoke. This feeling is probably a racial memory of times which saw the birth of magic, when the blackness of the up-

turned earth was an image to men of blasphemous violation and of inexplicable increase.

But everything in *Ulysses* has this mythical quality, and the humour is, like that of primitive peoples, the humour of size. Whatever validity there may be philosophically in Mr. Joyce's symbolical construction, in which each part of the book represents an organ of the human body, and the whole the human form divine, its humorous virtues are so clear that they leap out and strike the eye. Mr. Bloom is conceived on such an extravagant scale that he gives the effect of one of those Brobdingnagians who to Gulliver must have had the appearance of a landscape with spreading plains, rising peaks, thick woods and flowing streams. Now and then a single feature springs into grotesque prominence; we regard a nose as big as the side of a mountain, we climb over it, survey it, measure it; we see cheeks swelling like hills, eyes gleaming like lakes. To regard things in this way was a secret of primitive humour, and it found expression in the preoccupation of early man with giants and with the vast creatures which we call dragons; for these had an aspect comical as well as dreadful. It is the method which Mr. Joyce practises on Leopold Bloom, going back here to the sources of æsthetic emotion. Mr. Bloom is one of the great comic figures in literature. He is humorous not only in the tricks of his temperament and his mind, but like Falstaff in those of his body; and it is an artistic heresy to hold that the body is unworthy the regard of the spirit, and that Falstaff's belly had any less right to æsthetic expression than the lids of Juno's eyes. As a comic figure Mr. Bloom is so completely, so magnificently shown, that in regarding him we seem to be watching at its play the humour of the processes of life. Mr. Joyce has pursued comedy down to its source, penetrating to the

cells, to the dust out of which man rises. Through its minuteness his humour becomes universal, and gives one the feeling that not only men might feel warmed by it, but all the forms of that nature in which copulation and reproduction are omnipotent. It is a humour entirely of the earth, as perhaps all humour is.

It is a humour, too, in which extravagance is reinstated after being banished for a long time as childish and contrary to mature taste. In primitive humour there is something outrageous, and the humourist not only discloses the foibles and indecencies of his audience but flaunts his own, piling them up in a mountain and squatting upon it. This humour was an intellectual parody of the saturnalia, a little more wild in its imaginary excesses than the original. It was a great emotional and intellectual release, and it carried with it a total abnegation of dignity. Later came the comic artist who in making his audience laugh retained a sober countenance, admitting no fellowship with the frailties and lusts which in describing he satirized or excused. This has been the fashion of the last three centuries, a polite fashion in which the original flavour of humour was refined away. Comedy in this style amused men and made them resigned to their lot, thus fulfilling both a social and an ethical purpose; but it no longer gave them release. It was something different from humour in its first rude state, its means restraint and economy where originally they had been extravagance and grotesque abundance. Disregarding the fashion of centuries Mr. Joyce has recaptured the boundlessness of primitive humour. He has not been ashamed to play the clown, to resurrect the mock-heroic, which everybody thought was safely buried, and to practise parody, which nobody considered a form worth the notice of an artist of serious purpose. And to all

these he has given new significance, proving their possibilities. The part of *Ulysses* where the thoughts of Gerty MacDowell are presented in the manner of a penny novelette is not only parody; it is a unique and poignant form of expression, a doubly indirect, a multiple utterance, in which almost everything is left to be implied, and the triteness of the words conceals half-a-dozen meanings, some of them of an ethereal beauty. In handling subject-matter so trivial and so hackneyed as this Mr. Joyce shows most clearly the originality of his mind and the incisiveness of his art. His parodies of the daily newspapers do not merely amuse; they evoke a gigantic image of the fatuity of the mind. Things which we accept with an ineradicable laziness as modes he portrays as aspects of a profound folly, a still more profound stupidity; and, recognizing that it is not the press but the human intellect that he is parodying, we are not merely diverted, we are edified. He uses parody as a means of anatomizing the mind, showing that it, too, has its absurdities, its gigantic humours, as unavoidable, in spite of its dignity, as those of the body; and by an extravagance calculated in its seeming excess he reaches the essential in a new way.

But as if these things were not enough he has described clearly for the first time the realm only half-glimpsed by writers such as Mr. D. H. Lawrence, Mr. Sherwood Anderson and Miss Dorothy Richardson. He has revealed the swarming world of sub-conscious and half-conscious thoughts which constitute three-fourths of our life, and he has shown that it has a magical and excessive beauty. In hardly any other work of modern times is there such an overpowering sense of the inexhaustibility of human life. That he has succeeded in articulating a new world in a new language one cannot say; one feels that here and there he has won only an

approximate success; but that he has achieved so much is astonishing. He has made at least a rough anatomy of the dark god whom Mr. Lawrence sees only in glimpses and mentions only in hints; and if the outline is cloudy it is chiefly because the lineaments are huge. In *Ulysses* the total articulation of the sub-conscious body of man is obscured by the separate features; but by study if not by intuition they can be put together. The separate merits of the book we can apprehend immediately as we apprehend anything that in art is beautiful, but to appreciate its total beauty we have to draw upon reflection.

This fault *Ulysses* has; it has another which is more serious. For such a huge and multifarious work it is too continuously in one key. Rabelais, whom Mr. Joyce recalls constantly, wrote encyclopædically and minutely of the physical part of man, but he wrote also of man's spiritual part, giving it, too, its due tribute; and this is what makes Rabelais so satisfying. Mr. Joyce is encyclopædic; he is learnedly minute; but he is not satisfying, simply because one part of life he almost completely ignores; and by its lack of relief *Ulysses* sometimes oppresses us: the complementary part of our nature is interdicted expression. Mr. Joyce's book has neither the breadth nor the sanity of supreme comic art; its richness is not quite that of nature: the atmosphere is overheated, and the horizon is too narrow for the objects which are crowded into it. In *Ulysses* life presses in too closely upon us on every side; too closely for us to see it clearly. That is as much as to say that Mr. Joyce has not won a complete triumph over his subject-matter.

But his attempt is great, and his measure of success, considering the magnitude of the task, remarkable. No imaginative work of our time has so much of the un-

predictable quality of genius. In *Ulysses* the author has brought literary art back to its sources, and he has remained at them, drawing continuously from the fountainhead. The book has the quality which the Germans call *ursprunglich;* it is not a new mode of art, but rather a fundamental assertion of it. Consequently no work of our time has so completely the atmosphere and the authority of a scripture. It is the full utterance, enigmatic but not to be ignored, of one man. And like all scriptures it contains within it a principle of differentiation; many streams lead out from it, and it may well become the central point of a literature. The danger is not that it will remain unrecognized, but that in time it will overshadow some of the other potentialities of our age. Yet, though it may fetter the talents of a few artists, to many it will give their opportunity. On every side it is a beginning, and a beginning is what our generation has chiefly desired.

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